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30P

THE TIMES

No. 65,200 SATURDAY FEBRUARY 25 1995

Building societies shake-up plan Savers and borrowers to have more say

By ROBERT MILLER



Nelson: wants better rates for customers

THE Government yesterday opened a new era of investor democracy when it unveiled proposals to force building societies to become accountable to their millions of savers and borrowers.

Building societies will be allowed to offer a wide range of new financial services, including lending to small businesses and owning their own household insurance companies, but only if their members approve.

Anthony Nelson, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, published the results of a wide-ranging review of the 1986 Building Societies Act, with a 15-point package of measures designed to loosen some of the restrictions on societies. He warned societies, however, that they must give customers more accountability and better rates on savings accounts and mortgages.

"The Government places great importance on the role played by building societies as a safe haven for people's savings and the major source of housing finance in the UK," he said. "These measures will allow societies to develop that role across a wider range of financial services by removing unnecessary restrictions on their activities."

Mr Nelson added: "They will make members more aware of their position as shareholders in a mutual society. It will enable them, should they wish to do so, to become more actively involved."

Government the possibility of a voluntary code of practice to implement the specific list of proposed measures to strengthen the information provided by societies to their members. This should begin to happen shortly.

Brian Davis, the chief executive of the Nationwide, said: "We generally welcome the changes as they give us greater freedom to plan more effectively for meeting the future financial needs of our customers and to compete with the banks on a more equal footing."

Geoffrey Lister, the chief executive of Bradford and Bingley, said: "I am delighted that the Government has proposed constructive changes which show its commitment to building societies as separate and distinct institutions. The proposals on accountability to members will hopefully encourage a closer involvement in societies' affairs."

One controversial area tackled by Mr Nelson that is likely to need new legislation is the right of building society customers to benefit if their society merges with another, or floats on the stock market as Abbey National did.

Future legislation should change the status of borrowers in relation to bonus payments and will remove the distinction between shareholders and retail depositors.

Adrian Coles, the director-general of the Building Societies Association, said: "We look forward to discussing with the



Tony Blair, the Labour leader, looking in yesterday on Wallace and Wendoline, the stars of A Close Shave, an animated film being made by Nick Park in Bristol

Soccer ban on Cantona until October

ERIC Cantona will not play for Manchester United again until October after a Football Association panel yesterday found him guilty of bringing the game into disrepute.

Cantona, who had been banned by his club for the rest of this season after his attack

on a Crystal Palace supporter, was suspended from "all football activities" until September 30 and fined £10,000. United had fined him two weeks' salary, about £20,000.

The commission had taken into account the French player's disciplinary record, the

alleged provocation and the prompt action taken by his club. It also considered his "expression of regret". Cantona is to appear before magistrates on March 23 charged with assault.

Cantona penalty, page 44

Come out and fight, Major tells Tories on Euro vote

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

JOHN Major demanded yesterday that the Tory party "get up off its knees" as he called for loyalty from Conservative MPs in next week's critical Commons vote on Europe.

The Prime Minister opened his offensive to avoid a crippling defeat by delivering a warning to Tory MPs: "I expect you to be in our lobby supporting our policy." As he faced up to the prospect of a knife-edge vote, Mr Major said he would set down the Government's position on Europe but would expect the backing of all Tory MPs.

"It is time for the Conservative party to get up off its knees and start fighting." His plea came as the nine Euro-sceptic whipsless MPs, whose support will be crucial to the Government next week, increased pressure on Mr Major to postpone any decision on Britain joining a single currency.

Mr Major explained his unusual decision to make the opening speech in a Labour-initiated debate, saying he wanted to correct "misunderstandings" over European policy. "I will make it absolutely clear what our European policy is today, tomorrow and the long-term future. I intend to say to every Conservative MP, 'that is our policy and I expect you to be in our lobby supporting our policy.'"

His remarks opened up a six-day offensive by ministers aimed at defeating Labour's motion criticising the Government's EU policy. The combative stance, in a private speech in Scotland, came as senior Tories conceded that next Wednesday's vote will be extremely tight and that the result will hinge on whether Mr Major's opening speech wins over the sceptics. Ministers are anxious that an alliance of whipsless MPs, Tory Euro-sceptics and Ulster Unionists dismayed at the Northern Ireland framework document could inflict a defeat which Douglas Hurd, the Foreign Secretary, acknowledged yesterday would force a vote of confidence.

John Wilkinson, one of the whipsless MPs, increased pressure on Mr Major to give in to the sceptics' demands. Mr Wilkinson said that the debate "will be a great opportunity for him to seize the moral high ground over Europe by responding to the desire of the British people for a referendum".

Mr Hurd moved yesterday

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Mr Hurd moved yesterday

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to safeguard the Government against defeat by telling Euro-sceptics that a decision on a single currency need not be taken until the next century.

He emphasised the importance of Wednesday's vote. Tory unity could have a crucial long-term effect on party fortunes. "If we can put that division and weakness behind us as a result of Wednesday, the Labour party will have done the Government a powerfully good turn."

Robin Cook, Labour's Shadow Foreign Secretary, denied Mr Hurd's claim that Labour was pressing the debate out of political opportunism. "I see it as a proper use of the House of Commons for the Prime Minister to go there and set out the Government's policies on Europe," he said.

US accuses Pasqua of lying

FROM ADAM SAGE IN PARIS AND MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

CHARLES PASQUA, the French Interior Minister, yesterday added to controversy over the CIA's alleged espionage in Paris when he accused the Clinton Administration of leaking details of the affair to the press.

In a highly-unusual attack on a named minister of another country, the State Department in Washington responded by saying it greatly regretted M Pasqua's accusations and "categorically rejects the allegation that we are responsible for the detailed and totally reprehensible press leaks published in a number of French newspapers. This charge is neither true nor credible."

One senior American source said the Administration believed M Pasqua was the leaker.

The United States gained nothing from having its covert activities publicised, and "from the kind of detail that was provided it does seem like it was at least coming out of his office."

The State Department also denounced M Pasqua angrily for having divulged details of two meetings with Pamela Harriman, the US Ambassador. At the first, on January 26, M Pasqua said Mrs Harriman was told of the charges against her embassy officials. At the second she was asked speedily to remove them. By early this week nothing had happened, and the story was leaked. "All this can be blamed on the US delay in resolving the affair," M Pasqua told Le Monde.

The State Department said the US had "scrupulously respected the confidentiality agreed on" during the two meetings, and regretted M Pasqua's "inaccurate and incomplete account" of them.

"Any such exchanges by definition should have been protected by the rule of diplomatic confidentiality and we believe any public discussion of their content to be inappropriate."

A senior Administration source disclosed yesterday that one of the four CIA officers had already left Paris, and that the rest would do so shortly, either because their covers had been blown or

because their postings had run their course. The whereabouts of a fifth American, a private citizen who was accused of spying, is not clear.

The Americans concede that there is some foundation to the French charges, but counter that the French are guilty of far more spying. M Pasqua claimed the Americans spied not only in France, but across Europe. "This is very unfriendly behaviour, coming from an allied service."

In what looked like a huge breach of diplomatic protocol, the Gaullist Interior Minister had told Le Monde that he told Mrs Harriman in January that five Americans, four of them diplomats, had been identified as spies and should leave Paris. Two weeks later, she returned to say the US intended to take no action and to ask whether the five would be expelled. M Pasqua was quoted as saying. He replied that they would not.



Harriman: details of two meetings

French uncertainty, page 13

It's curtains for Fry, playwright says

By DOMINIC KENNEDY

STEPHEN FRY, the actor who has not been seen since Sunday, yesterday faxed his agent to blame stage fright for his "abrupt behaviour" in leaving Simon Gray's West End play Cell Mates.

Apologising to the author and Rik Mayall, his co-star, Fry said he had gone away to think about his career because "it would be foolish to carry on doing things for which I haven't either the aptitude or perhaps the desire."

The playwright said the fax was "wonderfully frank" and "honourable", but there his sympathy ended. Accusing Fry of leaving the cast in the lurch, he said: "Now that it turns out that he is all right, I am sick to death at the whole issue of Stephen, who is absolutely in the past as far as the company is concerned."

"I do wish someone would worry about the other casualties, because there have been an awful lot of them, including

now the play. We all know why he left. He left because his personal reviews were so tremendously unfavourable... he became emotionally deeply distressed and all that, but there is another story too, that is what that means to other people... [who] have been deeply hurt by the circumstances he created."

Gray recalled that Mayall had been in tears, believing Fry might have committed suicide, and had to perform nightly without knowing if his friend were alive or dead. "I have enormous affection for Stephen, et cetera, et cetera, but I really don't think it is a professional act just to step away from a production because you get bad reviews... A lot of the great names would not be in the theatre any more if they ran when they were wounded."

Fax statement, page 2
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Dinner in Grozny with guns on the menu

FROM ANATOL LIEVEN IN GROZNY

OUR introduction to the men of the Spetsnaz rapid reaction force was terrifying. We were at dinner in a Chechen household in Russian-held Grozny when we looked up to see a masked, uniformed figure with a levelled machinegun framed in the doorway. There were about two seconds of stunned silence, then a hoarse yell in Russian of "Stay still!" The room was filled with guns, camouflage uniforms and military curses.

In the course of the arrests that followed I received several kicks in the ribs and a crack over the head from a rifle butt. Things could, however, have

been much worse. As Dima, one of the men who arrested us, said later: "You know, you're really lucky. After the kind of report we'd had about you, we'd normally have chucked a grenade into the room first and looked for your documents later. I'm sorry we scared you but I was pretty scared."

It seems we were the victims, indirectly, of a non-existent Chechen military unit in which the Russians believe implicitly and which they fear greatly. The so-called "White Tights" are a mythical group of women snipers from the Baltic fighting on the Chechen side out of hatred of Russia.

Our Chechen host is a relative of and aide to the Russian-backed

Mayor of Grozny, so we had counted on being able to stay with him undisturbed. However his neighbours had denounced us as "strangers speaking with Baltic accents". It did not help that three of us were women correspondents. Lieutenant Colonel Yefimenko had put two and two together, got five Baltic snipers and sent the Spetsnaz to bring us in.

Later, when everything had been sorted out and our credentials established, the Spetsnaz men were apologetic. They invited us to an improvised banquet in their mess tent to celebrate Russian Army Day. Afterwards, as they escorted us home through the severe curfew, we sensed

just how worried even elite units like the Spetsnaz are in the city they now control. Believing that they could be shot at or ambushed at any moment, they moved in battlefield formation, covering open spaces at a run and levelling their weapons at every doorway - the besiegers besieged.

Although the large bump on my head suggests that the Spetsnaz are sometimes excessively cautious, they also behave like well-trained professionals, as demonstrated by the silence in which they surrounded and entered the house in which we were staying. It was in sharp contrast to many Russian army conscript units whose

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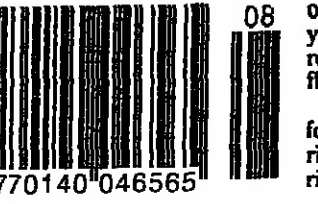
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Fry says sorry for cowardice and distress



Fry: not a breakdown, but a nervous stalling

A statement faxed by Stephen Fry to his agent, Lorraine Hamilton, yesterday said:

"I have been horrified and embarrassed to see from the papers how much attention my departure has provoked. I do want to apologise for all the distress and concern I have caused. I have been in touch with those closest to me to assure them of my good health, but I cannot let this opportunity go by without apologising again to two of the kindest and wisest people I know, Simon Gray and Rik Mayall, who have borne the brunt of this dismal affair. I have dealt them a very low blow indeed. My other friends know who they are and that I will be in touch with them.

I can only offer cowardice, embarrassment and distress as excuses for such absurd behaviour. I would like also to say that I hold no grudge against the theatre critics. I left not out of pique, because I had been wounded or hurt, but because I was afraid that they were terribly right and that I was letting down Rik

Mayall's brilliant performance in Simon Gray's remarkable play. They both deserved better and I am delighted and relieved that they are going to get it. I should also like to thank Mark Anderson for his heroism in going on for me and to apologise for the pressure this must have placed on him and to offer Duncan Wedon, a brave and resourceful producer, profound apologies for treating him so shabbily. I wish Simon Ward every good fortune and know that he will do great justice to a wonderful piece.

I have been selfish. I cannot deny that. But I only have one life to lead and no dependants. I desperately needed to go away and rethink my life. I may live for another 37 years and it would be foolish to carry on doing things for which I haven't either the aptitude or perhaps the desire. After realising how inadequate my performance in Cell Mates was, I'm afraid I suffered a dreadful attack of what golfers call the yips and actors call stage fright and I

slunk away rather than cause a scene in public. Basically, I couldn't stand the heat, so I escaped from the kitchen. The fact that I did so — the inadequacy of my acting aside — perhaps shows that I am not cut out for the business I have been engaged in for the last 15 years. But the reviews and sense of failure were, I think, only the straw that broke this camel's back. For years now I have been incapable of saying 'no' and have allowed my work to become my life.

I am offering this to the press in the hope that they will accept that I am not a Lord Lucan or a Reggie Perrin. While I have hurt and distressed those closest to me, it is for me to come to terms with them in private. I hope you will allow me a little space and solitude now. I could not bear to be 'tracked down' by the media. If you can accept my assurances of good health and mental stability perhaps you can leave it at that and give up any idea of finding and confronting me. In time, I will have to return and no doubt face the

music, but for the moment I need a little quietness, and if you could find it in yourselves to allow it me, I should be very grateful...

As for the Harley Street clinics and all the rest of it... you can be assured that while I do have a dentist in Harley Street, the only other occasion I have had cause to visit that thoroughfare was, ironically, for an insurance check-up for Cell Mates: these medicals are a requirement for all actors these days when engaging in long periods of work. I have not been seeking professional (or amateur) help for mental distress or anything else. While I have been very unhappy and distraught, this 'disappearance' is not a result of anything too violent or neurotic. Not so much a nervous breakdown, more a nervous stalling.

I'm a silly old fool and I don't deserve this attention. Thank you and sorry."

Actor apologises, page 1
Bernard Levin, page 18

Ferry blockade lifted as British company offers to replace Polish crew

Mediators move in as French seamen agree to negotiate

By JONATHAN PRYNN

A MOB of 200 French seamen clashed with riot police at Boulogne harbour yesterday on the second day of their strike against a British ferry company's use of low-wage Polish sailors.

Police with riot shields and rifles fired tear-gas to disperse the bottle-throwing demonstrators, who had attempted to seal off the harbour by setting light to barricades on approach roads. A pall of acrid smoke hung over the Channel port as strikers threw tyres, wooden pallets and oil-drums on to the barricades to stoke up the fires.

More than 100 armed Ministry of Defence riot police stood and watched, intervening only when the crowd attempted to storm the offices of Meridian, the small British ferry company at the centre of the dispute. However, a spokesman for Meridian, whose Boulogne manager has

received death threats, said his company's four ferry services had operated normally. A company representative is due to meet French government-appointed mediator Jean-Yves Hamon on Monday to try to reach a compromise with the three French maritime unions in dispute. "We are extremely angry that it has taken four weeks for the French government to take this action after it has pretended there is nothing going on," said Kevin Root, manager of UK operations.

The company has offered to replace some of its 130 Polish crew members with more expensive British seamen but the compromise has been rejected by French union leaders. At Calais services were returning to normal after a 23-hour blockade by the strikers was lifted. The P&O ship *Pride of Bruges* was the first back into the French port

when it docked at 12.15 yesterday afternoon, with almost 1,000 passengers aboard. By 4pm five Dover to Calais ferries were back to a normal service on the 75-minute route. They had been diverted to the Belgian port of Zeebrugge from where the crossing to England takes four hours. About 24,000 ferry passengers passed through Zeebrugge on Thursday and yesterday with long queues of traffic building up around the town.

A spokesman for Stena Sealink said his company's Dover to Calais services had returned to normal by late evening. The company's two French-crewed ships *Fiesta* and *Cote d'Azur* were held at Calais until the strike officially ended at 8pm last night but its other three vessels, *Stena Fantasia*, *Stena Challenge* and the *Stena Invicta* were back to their normal timetable by bedtime.



French riot police confronted hundreds of rioting demonstrators in Boulogne

Protestants urge leaders to talk

By PHILIP WEBSTER

THE people of Northern Ireland are optimistic about the prospects of the London-Dublin accord and keen for their leaders to engage in talks with the Government, a survey released last night showed.

The first poll of opinion since Wednesday's publication of the Anglo-Irish framework document suggested that a significant majority view the plans as a basis for lasting peace. It suggested a feeling among supporters of all parties that their leaders should not now break off relations with the Government.

However, the survey, carried out by Ulster Marketing Surveys for Channel 4 News, also confirms Unionist suspicions about the plans: 58 per cent of Protestants interviewed suggested they would eventually lead to a united Ireland. A

role for the Irish Republic in the affairs of Northern Ireland would be unacceptable to 68 per cent of Protestants. When asked if their leaders should take part in talks with the Government, 87 per cent said that they should. Some 81 per cent of supporters of the Ulster Unionist Party thought its leaders should talk. When asked if the framework document's proposals would lead to peace or violence, nearly two-thirds of those who expressed a view thought the proposals would form the basis for peace.

James Molyneux, leader of the Ulster Unionists, last night accused John Major of ending his party's relationship with the Government by publishing the "disastrous" Anglo-Irish document. The UUP's executive rejected it.

Major argues to keep Scots in Union

By PHILIP WEBSTER
POLITICAL EDITOR

JOHN MAJOR last night strove to force back the tide of Scottish nationalism with a warning that devolution would be a "Trojan horse to independence".

He told an audience in Glasgow that it was his duty to point out the damage devolution could do. He did not want to see Scottish people stepping into a decision that would weaken Scotland and throw away the opportunities earned over the past two decades.

He said he was ready to pay the electoral price of standing up for the Union, referring to large majority of Labour MPs in Scotland who might be sent from Westminster to a Scottish assembly if he went along with devolution. The unity of the United Kingdom was worth fighting for, he said.

With the Government facing the loss of the Perth and Kinross seat to the Scottish National Party in a by-election, Mr Major spent a day in Scotland defending his decision to refuse devolution while granting it to Northern Ireland as part of the peace proposals unveiled this week. He provoked fierce reaction with Alex Salmond, the SNP leader, contrasting his statesmanship over Ireland with his "narrow partisanship" over Scotland. Charles Kennedy, the Liberal Democrat MP, attacked Mr Major's "patronising and offensive" remarks.

During a radio interview and in the speech last night, Mr Major took head-on the supposed contradiction between his stances on Northern Ireland and Scotland. He said the circumstances and history of Scotland and Northern Ireland were completely different. The proposed Ulster assembly was not tax-raising. Northern Ireland had had 300 years of sectarian strife, no real local government system, and its main political parties were unlikely to form a government, unlike Scotland.

Mr Major said there had been "remarkable devolution of authority" to the Scottish Office. "I believe the sort of devolution proposed by Labour and the sort of separation advocated by the SNP would be desperately damaging." He mocked Labour by quoting Neil Kinnock "speaking some time ago" on devolution — "that you can have unity without disunity, that the best way to stand up to the nationalists is to lie down in front of them".

Mr Major said: "My fear is that the nature of devolution proposed would be but a stepping stone to separation of Scotland from the rest of the UK. It would also be desperately damaging, economically, to the economic welfare of Scotland." A tax-raising assembly would add £6 a week to tax bills and create "more regulation, more bureaucracy, mean less inward investment, and a much weaker voice in Europe".

Mr Major hinted that the government might offer some measures in Scotland but suggested that none were imminent. Referring to the Government's "taking stock" package of administrative changes, he said: "There will be other small changes in the pipeline but at the moment I have no substantial changes to announce beyond that."

NEWS IN BRIEF

RN press officers cleared of charges

Two Ministry of Defence civil servants who were suspended from their jobs for eight months while police investigated their expenses claims have been cleared of all charges.

David Harris, a Royal Navy press officer based at Plymouth, was investigated by Ministry of Defence police for including drinks valued at £2.40 on an expenses form after entertaining local journalists. The other press officer, Steve Willmot, was suspended over a claim for a subsistence allowance when he was travelling as part of his job. Yesterday David Jamieson, Labour MP for Plymouth Devonport, put the cost of the investigation at £50,000.

Desert Princess

The Princess Royal finished sixteenth in a 21-mile ride across the desert yesterday, ahead of 24 Arab riders. She completed the Desert Challenge Endurance Race in the United Arab Emirates in 68 minutes. Shaikh Mohamed al-Maktoum, the racehorse owner who had lent the Princess one of his horses, pulled up in the final quarter of the race because his mount was tired.

Dame Jill to quit

Dame Jill Knight, the right-wing backbencher, last night told her Conservative association in Birmingham Edgbaston that she will stand down at the next election. Dame Jill, 67, has held the seat since 1966. In 1992 she polled 18,500, a majority of 4,300 over the Labour candidate.

Radio 1 sacking

Radio 1 yesterday sacked DJ Bruno Brookes and hired two new presenters from rival stations in the latest move to boost ratings. Mr Brookes has presented the breakfast show for the past three years. The new faces are Wendy Lloyd, 25, from Virgin 1215, and "Dangerous" Chris Pearce, from Kiss FM.

Murder inquiry

Steven Grievson, 23, of Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, who is accused of murdering three teenagers, is being questioned by Northumbria police about the death of a fourth boy. He was re-arrested as he was being taken to court for a remand hearing. The boy was 14 when he was murdered in 1990.

Benn wins case

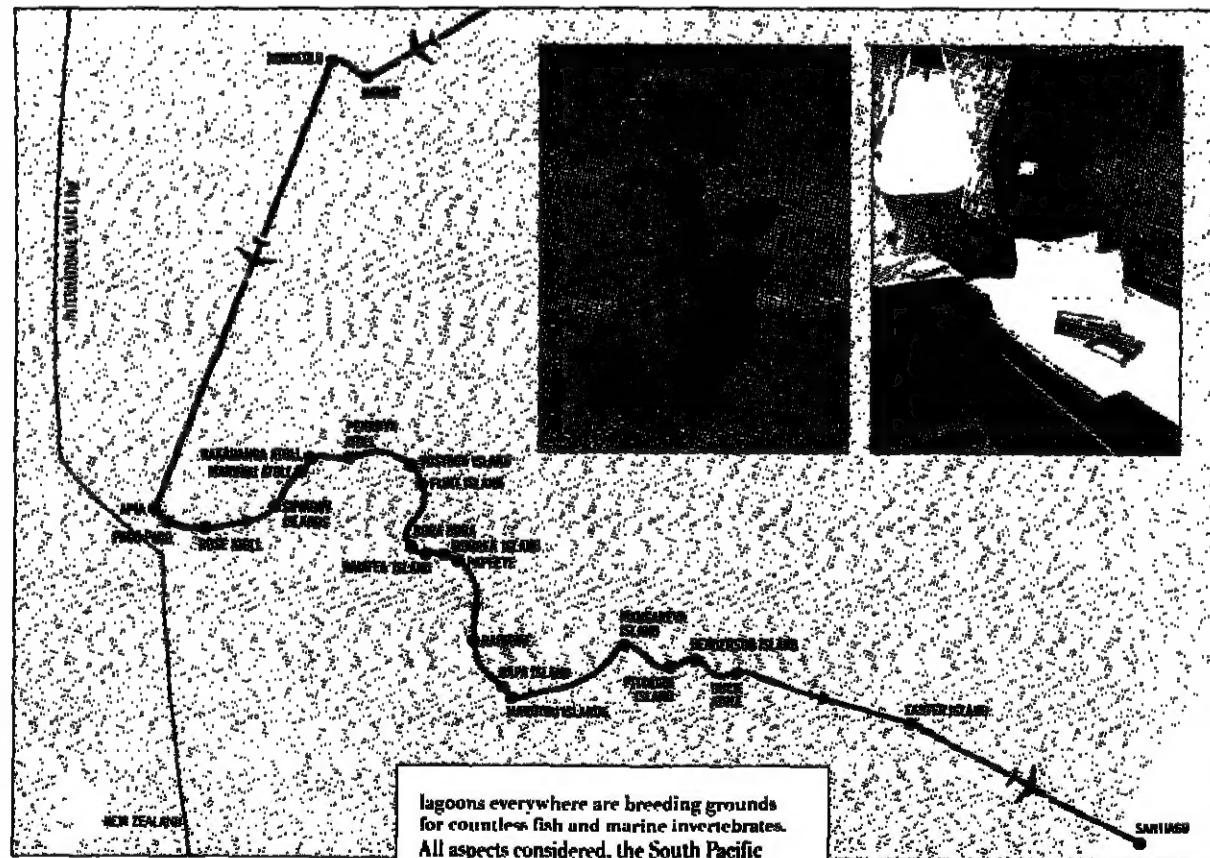
The breach of contract action brought against the boxer Nigel Benn by his former trainer Brian Lynch was dismissed in the High Court. Mr Justice Kennedy accepted that Benn had never signed a seven-year contract promising Mr Lynch 10 per cent of his earnings inside and outside the ring.

Foot to sue

The former Labour leader Michael Foot is to sue over allegations that he was a KGB spy, his solicitor announced. Libel proceedings have been issued against Rupert Murdoch, Times Newspapers Ltd and News Group Newspapers Ltd over articles in *The Sunday Times* and *News of the World*.

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lagoons everywhere are breeding grounds for countless fish and marine invertebrates. All aspects considered, the South Pacific has it all — scenic beauty, colourful cultures, welcoming people and a fascinating natural history.

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AFTER 1995

Grozny

continued from page 1
record in this war has been lamentable.

Our particular Spetsnaz unit — called SOBR, or the Special Rapid Reaction Force — is not an army unit at all, but is made up of special policemen, thrown together two months ago from half a dozen different regional police units similar to the American SWAT groups.

SOBR expresses a mixture of sympathy and contempt for the army conscripts: "They should have used us professionals at the beginning, instead of sending those wretched 18-year-old kids to be slaughtered," Andrei, SOBR commander, told me.

The unhappy Chechen population of Grozny greatly prefers the special forces and the Interior Ministry troops. As one middle-aged Chechen, Magomet, said: "It is the young Russian kids with guns who are really dreadful. They're terrified, they get blind drunk, and then they can shoot you for nothing or destroy your home for fun. The Interior Ministry men are more restrained."

We may owe our lives to that difference.

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'Physician could not cure himself of illness which caused him to do this dreadful act'

Mental hospital for GP who killed his daughter

BY LIN JENKINS

A GP addicted to alcohol and tranquillisers battered his student daughter to death before booby-trapping his house and fleeing to France, a court was told yesterday.

Dr Patrick Alesworth was sent to a mental hospital for an indefinite period after Reading Crown Court had been told of the "Greek tragedy" that led to his daughter Sara being bludgeoned and stabbed to death. The doctor travelled to France on a ferry and was eventually cornered by French police after trying to hijack a car.

The court was also told that Dr Alesworth's family and colleagues had stood by him since the killing. His wife Jane and his eldest daughter Emma, 23, held hands and wept as sentence was passed. A third daughter, Kathleen, was not in court. The court was told that Dr Alesworth had a history of mental illness and believed that his career was in ruins when he attacked Sara, 20, on April 13 last year at the family home in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire.

He repeatedly beat her around the head with a club hammer before stabbing her three times with a kitchen knife as she was dying from head injuries. He then killed Jessie, the family spaniel and set electrical timing devices and cut gas pipes in the house



Sara Alesworth: hit with club hammer

in an effort to destroy his home and kill himself and his family.

Mr Justice Morison said he accepted that Alesworth was in a psychotic state, irrational and suffering delusions at the time. Otherwise, he would have sentenced him to 20 years in prison. Instead, he placed him under a restriction order "unlimited in time because I take the view that you may well require to be confined in hospital indefinitely".

Alesworth, 48, pleaded guilty to manslaughter on the ground of diminished respon-

sibility. Brian Barker, QC, for the prosecution, said no motive could be found for the "bizarre and baffling" killing. Alesworth had a "repressed history, a depressive illness and dependency on alcohol and tranquillisers, sometimes illegally prescribed by Dr Alesworth himself".

Alesworth, a principal GP for 18 years at the Elmhurst practice in Aylesbury, retired in 1993 because of ill health. The following year he was working for the doctors deputising service. Sara was on Easter vacation from Bournemouth University. There was no animosity between her and her father.

"She was particularly concerned for his welfare, a fact which he knew," Mr Barker said. But she was killed after her mother and sister Kathleen, 17, had left for work and school respectively, shortly after Alesworth awoke worrying about his work.

He resolved to kill himself and his family and a voice in his head was telling him to kill. He battered Sara on the landing with a club hammer inflicting 14 blows to her head and stabbed her with the kitchen knife before dragging her into the bedroom and killing the dog. Afterwards, he cancelled his work, telephoned his wife and asked when she would be home and then bought some false number plates for his car. Kathleen

arrived home to find a note on the door saying there had been a gas leak and not to go in before six o'clock. She went to a neighbour who telephoned Mrs Alesworth. When she arrived home she asked a neighbour to call police and saw her husband coming round the side of the house looking "emotionless and ashen". She found her daughter's body and tried to telephone police from the bedroom, but the line had been cut. Alesworth's car was blocked in so he took his wife's and drove away. He was spotted on the Portsmouth-St Malo ferry and arrested in France.

Two of the timing devices in the house activated, setting fire to paper deliberately littered around a toaster. The fires were extinguished by police officers who broke in. When Alesworth was found he had a bottle of vodka and a syringe in his car and was the worse for drink and drugs. Tests showed alcohol and the drug procaine in his blood.

Alan Mainds, QC, for the defence, said: "He was the physician who could not cure himself from an illness of the mind which caused him to do this dreadful act. It is only to be hoped that the profession he served so well for 25 years can restore his sanity so that his surviving daughters can see it is their father's illness that took their sister away."



Alesworth is led from court. Below, his wife Jane and daughter Emma

Missing boy, 14, phones home from Malaysia

BY RICHARD DUCE

A BOY of 14 who ran away from home after "slight arguments" with his parents telephoned them two days later to say he was stranded 7,000 miles away in Malaysia with no money.

Peter Kerry, whose ambition is to be an airline pilot, had taken his father John's credit card and passport and booked himself on a £500 flight to Kuala Lumpur at Heathrow Airport on Tuesday. Peter, who has previously run away to Edinburgh and Paris from his home in northwest London, was last night still believed to be in Southeast Asia, although his parents have no idea where.

On Thursday night he telephoned his mother, Pat, from a hotel 200 miles from Kuala Lumpur after being refused a bed because by then the card had been cancelled. The call

was cut off and since then there has been no contact with him.

Police in Malaysia and Singapore have been alerted by Interpol to look out for the fair-haired grammar school boy. His parents, who both work at Heathrow, are hoping their son can make his way back to an airport because police checks have revealed he bought an open-ended return ticket.

Mr Kerry, 59, of South Harrow, said he was not sure why Peter had run away again. "It might have been two slight arguments during the day which made him go. He is a very intelligent boy but he is a dreamer and he very much likes to go off on his own. He is very interested in travel. He has done a great deal of travelling all over the country in trains and has also

travelled to France on his own."

Peter was at home alone on Tuesday night while his mother was working and his father took his brother Michael, 11, and sister Helen, 8, to the Arsenal-Nottingham Forest football match. The family returned and believed him to be in bed. Next day there was no sign of him and he was reported missing at 9.15.

As far as Peter's movements can be traced, he made his way to Heathrow and then managed to book himself on the 10pm Malaysian Airlines flight to Kuala Lumpur. By 9.20pm on Thursday he had made his way 200 miles south across country to the Puteri Pan Pacific hotel in Johor Bahru on the border with Singapore. It was there that the hotel ran a check on his father's Barclaycard and found it had been cancelled.

Mrs Kerry said last night: "They were going to chuck him out and he sounded very worried. Our conversation was very brief, it was broken off. Why he chose Malaysia I don't know, I think it was just the opportunity that he got at the airport."

The hotel, confirming last night that Peter had tried to book in but did not have enough money, said: "He was alone but we don't know where he went."

The Foreign Office said: "The last we heard he was still in Malaysia. As soon as he is spotted we will hopefully be able to offer our assistance and make arrangements to get him home."



Mr and Mrs Kerry with a photograph of their son — "a dreamer who likes to go off on his own"

Bank computer clerk tried to transfer £31m abroad

BY RICHARD DUCE

A CLERK at the National Westminster Bank who hacked into his company computer to transfer more than £31 million into a Swiss account was trapped by the "dazzling" size of the transaction, a court was told yesterday.

Jeffrey Lennon, 23, was caught because he did not know that the Bank Credit Suisse in Zurich could not authorise the money's further movement to a Swiss account, as it had a lending limit of \$30 million with Lennon's employers.

After his arrest Lennon said that two underworld figures had approached him to help them in the fraud and that he was frightened of what might happen to him if he refused. His share from the plot was to be £4.2 million. Detective Sergeant Gregory Falkland said Lennon was a "mechanic" in the plot and inquiries were continuing to identify the others involved. Lennon, a com-

mmercial loans clerk of Forest Gate, east London, admitted at Southwark Crown Court conspiring to steal 70 million Swiss francs (£11.8 million) between August 1 and September 23, 1993. He will be sentenced on Tuesday.

Nicholas Lorraine-Smith, for the prosecution, said that Lennon, who had worked for NatWest from the age of 16, used someone else's computer password to authorise the money transfer. After the alarm was raised it was remembered that on the day of the transfer he had been in a part of the NatWest building in Islington, north London, where he had no authorisation to be.

Mr Lorraine-Smith said Lennon at first protested his innocence but then confessed, saying that men he knew only as "big people" were involved. He had been scared into going along with the plan. An account had been set up at

the Banco del Gottardo in Lugano under the false name of Kirk Gissler. "I knew ten days before that I was into something that I just could not handle or what the consequences were or what would happen to my friends and family if I pulled out."

Timothy Langdale, QC, representing Lennon, said that he was full of remorse. He urged Judge Rivlin, QC, not to be blinded by the "telephone-number sized" amount. The judge retorted: "But it is pretty dazzling, isn't it?" Mr Langdale said that Lennon was "acting under considerable pressure and out of his depth".

Mr Lorraine-Smith said Lennon had been recruited to the commercial loans department because of his expertise with their advanced computer system. He carried out the final stages of money transfers. He told police: "I'm the last person. I send the payments. I hit the button and it goes."



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12 PAGES OF SPORT EVERY MONDAY

James Herriot spawned a multimillion-pound industry but the real vet had few trappings of wealth

Yorkshire town mourns its shy and modest celebrity

By KATE ALDERSON
AND MARIANNE CURPHEY

JAMES HERRIOT generated a multimillion-pound industry from 23 bestselling books but the vet known in Thirsk as Alf Wight lived a modest life in a £150,000 farmhouse. There was uncertainty yesterday over how much money Mr Wight, who died on Thursday, made from the books that sold 30 million copies worldwide and were made into 50 television programmes and two films.

Royalties of up to 15 per cent for every book he wrote will continue to be paid to his family, who hold the copyright. He leaves a widow, Joan, a son James, who runs the veterinary practice at Thirsk, a daughter Rosie Page, who is a GP in the town, and four grandchildren: Emma, Nicholas, Zoe and Katrina.

The practice, co-founded by Mr Wight in 1939, was open for business as usual yesterday. Joanne Richardson, a nurse, said that it had been inundated with telephone calls from clients past and present expressing their con-



Thirsk, where Alf Wight practised, was known in his books as Darrowby

dolesces. One woman, who brought a lamb into the surgery for treatment, "I have been coming here for 36 years and I'm devastated by his death."

Mrs Wight and her son were in Glasgow yesterday to open a £330,000 veterinary library at Glasgow University where Alf Wight trained. In the days leading up to his death he asked his son, who

also trained at Glasgow, to honour their pledge to open the James Herriot library.

Farmers spoke fondly yesterday of a dedicated friend: Bertram Bosomworth, 82, a dairy farmer from Thirsk, was an early client. "He was everything: the perfect gentleman, a very good vet and a great friend," he said. "He was my vet for 50 years and I remember him as a relaxed

young man, confident and sensible, when he first visited and treated a sick calf."

The success of the James Herriot books did not adversely affect the man his friends knew as charming and shy. Locals were happy to shield him from tourists, denying knowledge of where he lived and worked.

John Crooks, 67, Mr Wight's former pupil and

assistant and the only person referred to in the books by his real name, described his mentor's death as an immense loss. "Alf and I just clicked, he was the most wonderful man."

"We used to drive to jobs across the Dales in his Morris Minor with the hood pulled down. His children, Jim and Rosie, would be in the back seat and a little dog on my lap in the front."

"We would sing our hearts out as we drove across country, eating our ice-creams. He was such a great family man and when I had my own children I tried to be like him. You could have no better role model."

In his converted farmhouse at Thirby, near Thirsk, Mr Wight kept a copy of all the different editions of his books in dozens of languages, but was reluctant to publicise his achievements. Mr Crooks said: "I remember when he received yet another award for life-long service. He hadn't put it on the wall in his house and I asked him why. He replied: 'It looks a bit like I'm showing off. I don't want people to think I'm a show-off.'"



Vet John Crooks with his dog Bess: "Alf was the most wonderful man"

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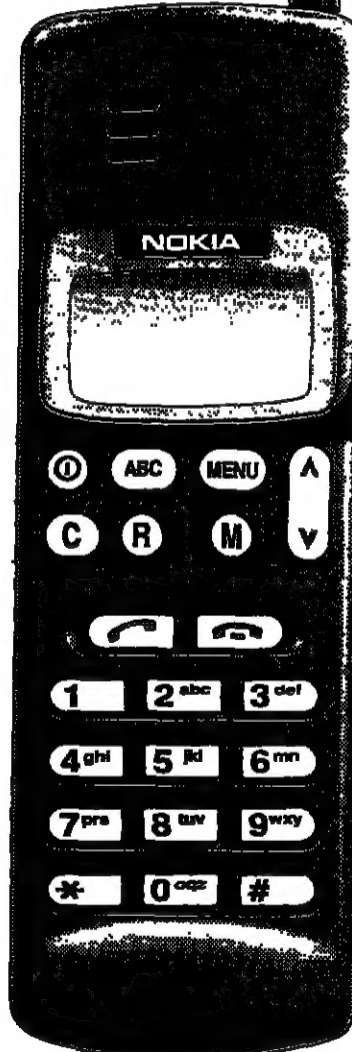
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Tories set to double borough's local tax

By IAN MURRAY

WANDSWORTH is to more than double its council tax next year. The ruling Conservatives agreed last night that the loss of £17 million in special government aid meant it could no longer set the lowest rates in England.

The 134 per cent increase will be rubber-stamped by the full council next week. Levels are set to rise inexorably in future years as special help for the borough is phased out.

Ten years ago the council was charging less local tax than any other London borough. Its poll tax levels and later its council tax levels were the lowest on mainland Britain. Last year householders in Band D property had to pay only £139. This year they will pay £326.

The main reason is that the borough has lost £10 million of the £21 million extra government aid it was granted last year to cushion the effects of transition from poll tax to council tax. Another £5 million in grants to alleviate poverty and £2 million for education have also been taken away, leaving the borough with £17 million less than it had a year ago.

Since the rate would therefore have to rise, the Tory group decided to take the opportunity of paying off £45 million of debt at the same time. This will be done by drawing £27 million from reserves and raising £18 million from council tax, leaving the debt at £15 million and reducing the sum needed to service the loan. "This will enable us to keep down council tax bills in future years," Maurice Heaster, chairman of the policy and finance committee, said yesterday.

Tony Belton, leader of the Labour group, said: "This is the beginning of the end of government handouts to Wandsworth. Other Tory councils have been angry at how Wandsworth has been treated in the past. The fantasy days are coming to an end." Wandsworth could have used part of its reserves to keep the council tax down, he said. "What they are doing is paying off the 'mortgage' before the next council elections."

Labour questions nursery policy

By BEN PRESTON

LABOUR yesterday accused the Government of speaking with two voices on nursery education after Conservative backbenchers were urged to question councils which expanded provision for the under-fives.

David Blunkett, the shadow Education Secretary, made the charge after the leak of a private letter from Gillian Shephard to parliamentary colleagues disclosed her strategy to deflect criticism of threatened school budget cuts. The Education Secretary detailed questions which Conservative MPs might ask in an attempt to switch the blame for any teacher redundancies on to local education authorities. These included, according to *The Times Educational Supplement*: "To what extent is the local education authority expanding non-statutory services (eg, under-fives) at the expense of statutory services?"

Mr Blunkett said: "At the Conservative party conference, the Prime Minister promised that there would be nursery places for all four-year-olds. Now Mrs Shephard is urging backbenchers to attack those councils which have sought to provide those places."

A spokesman for Mrs Shephard said she was making clear that local authorities must make the protection of statutory education services their priority in what was a tough local government spending round.



Shephard: leaked letter

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Recuperating friends share unusual bond after 'domino' operation transfers organs

Transplant patients discover they have a heart in common

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH SERVICES CORRESPONDENT

TWO soccer supporters who woke up in neighbouring hospital beds after simultaneous heart transplants found that they had more in common than a love of football: the same heart had beaten in both their chests.

Chris Duffy, 20, and Michael Cheeseman, 13, became friends while recuperating in Harefield Hospital after having surgery a week ago. Their friendship was sealed when Mr Duffy discovered that his heart had been transplanted into Michael.

Mr Duffy, a sufferer from the inherited disorder cystic fibrosis, was given the heart and lungs of a road crash victim in an operation carried out by Sir Magdi Yacoub. His heart was then transplanted into Michael, who was suffering from a hole-in-the-heart condition. The double operation took eight hours. Doctors

had told both patients that they needed surgery urgently. Mr Duffy's consultant told him that he had been living on borrowed time for seven years.

Cystic fibrosis damages the lungs of sufferers but the heart is unaffected. However, transplanting the heart and lungs together is simpler than transplanting the lungs separately. The operation therefore yields a spare healthy heart which can be used in a "domino" transplant.

Dr Martin Scott, medical administrator of the Cystic Fibrosis Research Trust, said: "The plumbing is more straightforward with the heart and lungs together. The unit plugs in more quickly."

Mr Duffy, from Blackwood, Gwent, and Michael, from Liverpool, were both called at the same time when the original donor organs became

available. They met for the first time 48 hours after the surgery.

Mr Duffy said: "It's a strange feeling, but it's like I've found a long-lost brother. It's peculiar to think someone else is walking around with my heart beating inside him. The strangest thing of all is we get on incredibly well."

"I feel as if I've known Michael for years. One thing is for certain, Michael's going to have a wicked time with my heart because I've put it through hell."

There are 6,500 sufferers from cystic fibrosis in Britain. In the early stages of the disease the congestion in the lungs caused by the overproduction of mucus can be cleared with regular physiotherapy but as the condition worsens breathing is more difficult. Ultimately a transplant is the only treatment.



Chris Duffy, left, has a donor's heart and lungs while his former heart beats in Michael Cheeseman's chest

Nurses attack 'greedy' charge

Nurses registered with an agency providing private community care are being charged 40p on their payrolls for administration. Yesterday Jenny Dearlove, 40, a spokeswoman for the nurses, who earn under £3 an hour, described Allied Healthcare of Stone, Staffordshire, as greedy.

A director of the agency, which has an annual turnover of £10 million, said: "The 40p charge covers all our administration costs that we incur when trying to find work for these nurses."

Glen Coe search

Hopes faded for three climbers missing in the Glen Coe area of the Scottish Highlands yesterday. An intensive search continued for the three men from Yorkshire, thought to have been buried by an avalanche on Buachaille Etive Mòr.

Officer sentenced

A Thames Valley policeman who punched a drunken motorist he was trying to arrest was jailed for four months at Inner London Crown Court and ordered to pay his victim £200. James Kemp, 27, of Henley-on-Thames, denied causing actual bodily harm.

'Dead' man jailed

A man who faked his death to avoid a drink-driving charge was jailed for 18 months. Alan Smith, 61, of Yateley, Hampshire, had four previous convictions for the offence and was serving a three-year ban when stopped by police last year.

Aid for family

The family of an illegal immigrant serving a ten-year jail sentence for drug dealing have been granted legal aid to fight his deportation. Arshad Mahmood, 37, faces immediate expulsion when he is released on parole in a few weeks.

Gas pair treated

An eight-months pregnant woman and her boyfriend were treated in a decompression chamber after inhaling fumes thought to have leaked from their gas central heating. Claire Preece, 18, and Lee Simpson, 21, of Cardiff, were treated at Plymouth.

Museum move

Duncan Robinson, 51, director of the Yale Center for British art at New Haven, Connecticut, is to be the new director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. He succeeds Simon Jervis, who is joining the National Trust.

Hewitt in court as defence witness

JAMES HEWITT yesterday made his first public appearance — as a defence witness in a murder trial — since telling the world of his alleged affair with the Princess of Wales.

Robert Smith, 33, served under Mr Hewitt, then a major in The Life Guards, during the Gulf War, the High Court in Edinburgh was told.

Mr Smith is one of three men accused of murdering David Dunn, 63, after a bank raid in Bonnyrigg, Lothian, last October. He has told the court that the weapon that killed Mr Dunn was an American-issue Glock pistol he brought back from the Gulf.

Mr Hewitt, 36, who described himself as a self-employed businessman living near Exeter, said he was aware of the bartering or exchange of equipment between forces in the Gulf campaign. It was quite common for British soldiers to acquire non-standard issue weapons and the Army's attitude to this was "fairly relaxed".

Mr Smith, of no fixed abode, Gerald McQuade, 40, of Glasgow, and Paul Bootland, 25, of Edinburgh, deny murdering Mr Dunn and attempting to murder three other men. They are also accused of robbing a bank of £185,000. The case continues.

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'They have confronted this disaster with remarkable courage and determination'

Miners paralysed by accident share £1.3m damages

BY A STAFF REPORTER

TWO miners who were left paralysed below the waist after a pit disaster in which two colleagues died were each awarded more than £650,000 in the High Court yesterday.

Alan Curry, 33, and Jeffrey Branson, 37, were among 70 men trapped 1,000 ft underground in February 1992 when a carriage taking them to the coalface at the now-closed Wearmouth Colliery, Sunderland, crashed. Doctors said they would never walk again.

The men were crushed against a roof tunnel when the carriage jack-knifed upwards. Rescuers fought for an hour to reach the trapped men, some of whom acted as human pitprops to protect their colleagues. The men who died were Eric Evans, 36, and Gerard Sumbly, 39.

Ben Hyman, QC, for Mr Curry and Mr Branson, both from Sunderland and married with children, said: "Both still suffer severe pain and are still

plagued by nightmares. They frequently recall the accident and become depressed, not just because of their paraplegic condition but because of the recollections of the deaths of their friends and the horror they went through.

"They were two young married men, both very fit," he said that their families had had to share the burden and their wives had become full-time carers.

British Coal admitted liability for the crash. Mr Curry, who was a keen footballer and Mr Branson, a karate purple belt and a fellwalker, sat in their wheelchairs at Teesside Crown Court yesterday. Mr Curry was awarded a total of £652,982. Mr Branson received a total of £650,238.

Mr Branson was awarded £230,454 special damages, Mr Curry £223,763. The cost of care was £109,912 for Mr Branson, £93,262 for Mr Curry. They were each awarded

more than £65,000 for accommodation. For loss of earnings Mr Curry was awarded £150,000 and Mr Branson £120,000.

The judge, Mr Justice Laws, paid tribute to the men's wives, Helen Curry and Yvonne Branson, "to whose loyalty, courage and devotion in the face of this sudden and brutal disaster this court wishes to pay tribute".

He added: "It is a remarkable tribute to the human spirit but, what is more important for my purposes, to the plaintiffs and their wives in particular that Mr Branson and Mr Curry have confronted the disaster which befell them with remarkable courage and determination. There was not a trace of self-pity in the evidence of either of them. Their positive attitude is due in no small measure to the support of their wives, and the mutual support which they have found in each other."



Jeffrey Branson, left, with his wife Yvonne. Right, Alan Curry with his wife Helen and children Natasha and Aaron

THE SUNDAY TIMES

Exclusive: My story by Oleg Gordievsky

"The KGB net was closing around me, and I knew that if I did not break out of the great concentration camp of the Soviet Union within the next few weeks, I would die."



The time had come to activate the escape plan which MI6 had prepared for me and held in readiness for years...

First extracts from the memoirs of Oleg Gordievsky (pictured). Only in The Sunday Times tomorrow

Farming land lost to soil erosion

BY NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

BILLIONS of tons of soil are being washed and blown away every year, damaging the Earth's ability to feed its growing population. The rate of soil erosion from agricultural land in Europe and America is 17 tons per hectare per year, Dr David Pimental of Cornell University reports in this week's issue of *Science*. New soil is created at the rate of only one ton per hectare.

In Africa, Asia and South America, average erosion rates are even higher, at 40 tons per hectare per year. As land is tilled and exposed, raindrops splash soil particles into the air. On sloping land, the particles are carried downhill, and winds can sweep them thousands of miles: soil particles from Africa have been found in Florida, and Chinese soil in Hawaii.

"We know what to do to control erosion, but we aren't doing it," Dr Pimental says. "Few people really appreciate the seriousness of the problem."

In Britain, the Council for the Protection of Rural England says, fields drilled to winter cereals are particularly vulnerable — 40 per cent of water erosion happens in these fields. Over-grazed uplands are also at risk, while wind erosion is a particular danger on flat, open expanses of sandy or peaty soils, such as those in East Anglia and the Vale of York.

The council called for vulnerable soils to be identified, a soil conservation unit established in the Ministry of Agriculture, and changes to make agricultural support payments conditional on good soil management.



Campbell: sacked for being greedy and rude

Campbell patches up catwalk quarrel

By JOE JOSEPH

NAOMI CAMPBELL, one of those supermodels who don't get out of bed for less than \$10,000, has just climbed back in with the agency that kicked her out for being too greedy, too abusive and too prone to tantrums.

John Casablancas, owner of the Elite agency in New York, swore in September 1993 that he would not employ Campbell, 24, again "if she were the last model on earth". He now says: "My professional instincts took over my pride."

Carole White, director of the agency's London arm, Elite Premier, said: "She and John settled their differences. Time heals everything."

This is all a long way from the statement issued by Elite New York at the time of their split: "Please be informed that we do not wish to represent Naomi Campbell any longer. No amount of money or prestige could further justify the abuse that has been imposed on our staff and clients. All who have experienced this will understand."

Windy Orkneys generate tourism

By KERRY GILL

PROMOTING hurricane force winds and crashing seas as a holiday bonus would not appear to be the best method of attracting visitors, but the tourist board in the Orkney Islands is making the best of a difficult job by doing just that.

Orkney boasts some magnificent sandy beaches but, more often than not, they are lashed by torrential storms from the northern Atlantic. Howie Firth, an Orkney councillor and chairman of the economic development committee that helps to fund the tourist board, said islanders had noticed how many foreign visitors claimed to love the weather.

"Our weather is an experience never to be forgotten. A walk along an Orkney beach in a storm is every bit as exhilarating as climbing a mountain," he said.

Promotion of the appalling weather, alongside the wild scenery, rare birds and archaeological remains, seems to be working: foreign visitors have increased while

tourism in other Scottish regions has fallen.

The idea of turning the traditional method of tourism promotion on its head came from Charles Tait, the tourist board chairman. "I was in a taxi in Spain and the driver said how much he had enjoyed his stay in Manchester, of all places," he said. "I asked him why, and he said he always visited a relative in Manchester because he loved the rain. I thought if Manchester could attract visitors with its rain, Orkney could do even better."

It certainly can. Winds can exceed 100mph and towering waves change the shape of beaches overnight. Winter mists shut off the island for days, but spring brings out the sun and huge fields carpeted with wild flowers.

"We tell tourists that you can get every season in a single day," Mr Tait said. "If you get a really good blow, you don't worry about losing anything as anything you could have lost has already been blown away."

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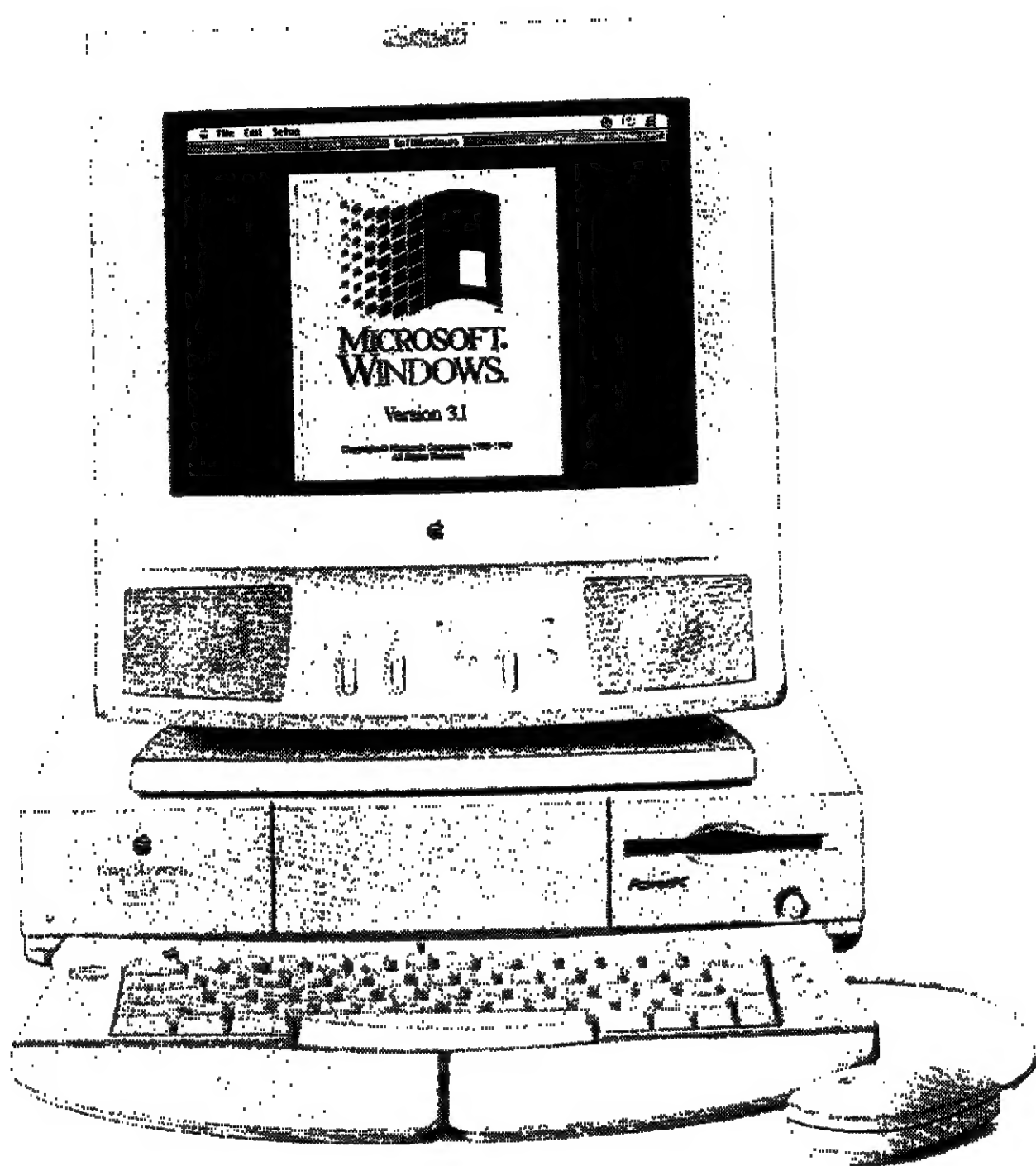


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Historian and actor take up positions to debate whereabouts of English archers on battlefield

Rival experts prepare to do battle over Agincourt



Henry V: victorious

By JOHN YOUNG

FIVE hundred and eighty years ago a 25,000-strong French army was routed by an English force less than a quarter its size on the field of Agincourt. Although the fact of the victory has never been in dispute, the method of its achievement has and will be the subject of what promises to be a heated debate in London tomorrow.

The two sides in the debate, which is being organised by the Battlefields Trust at the Tower of London Education Centre, are Matthew Bennett, senior lecturer in war studies at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, and the actor Robert Hardy, who is a lead-

ing authority on archery and, in particular, the use of the longbow.

The battle took place on a cramped, muddy field between two woods, factors which helped to nullify the French superiority in numbers. Victory is credited to the English archers who, protected from the advancing French cavalry by a line of stakes, were able to shoot them down and throw the attack into confusion as the retreating cavalry became entangled with the troops advancing from the rear.

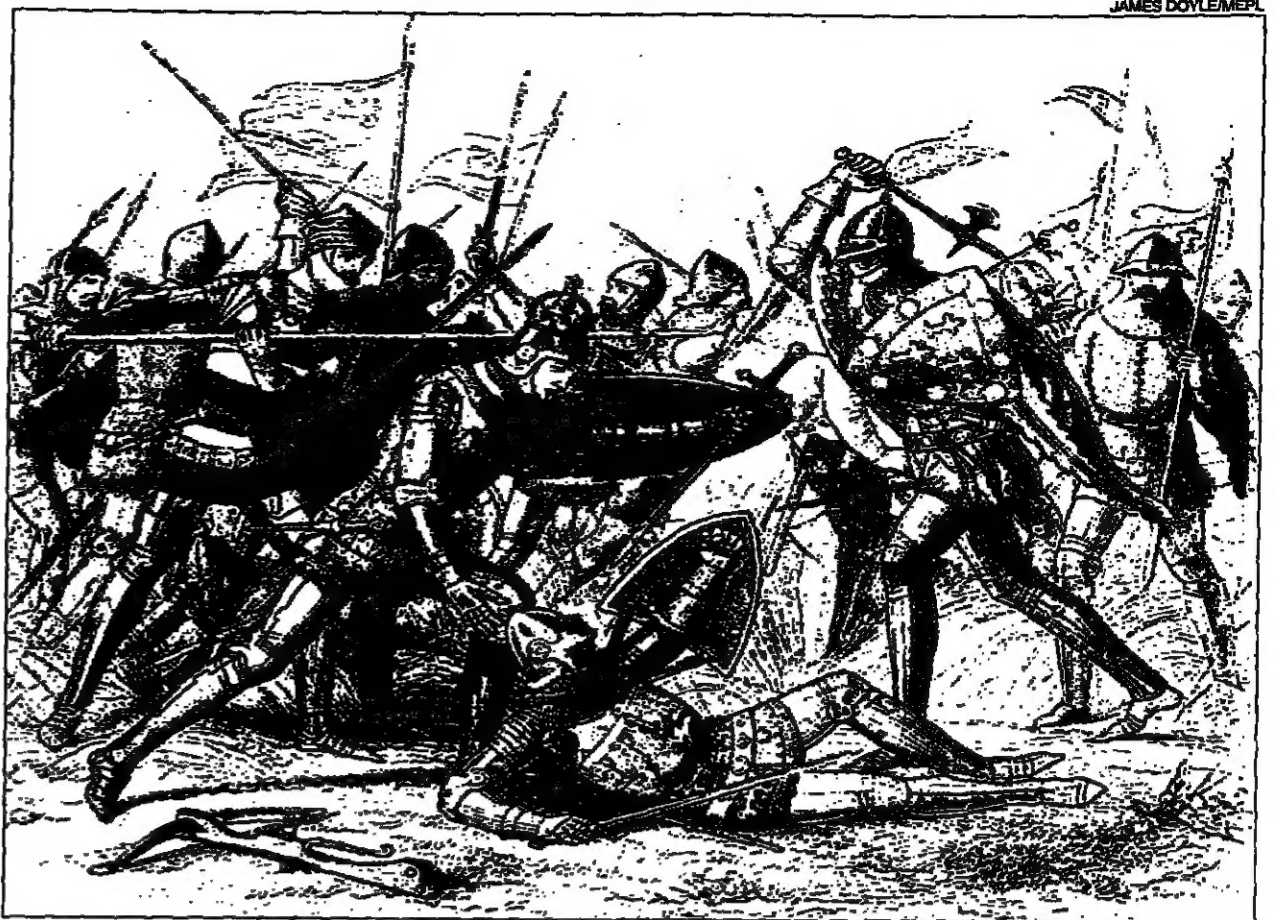
The argument revolves around the exact position of the archers. In his recent book,

The Development of Battle Tactics in the Hundred Years War, Mr Bennett suggests that the English men-at-arms were grouped in three phalanxes in the centre with the archers on the wings. As the French advanced they were caught in a deadly crossfire from the flanks.

Mr Hardy argues that the maximum range of the English archers was between 300 and 400 yards, so they would not have been able to reach the centre of the line, which stretched for at least 1,000 yards. He maintains that the archers were either positioned on the flanks of the three individual phalanxes or, more likely, strung out in a "coronet" across the entire front.

Yesterday the two men seemed to be moving closer to each other's view. Mr Bennett suggested that some groups of archers were placed in triangular formations between and slightly ahead of each phalanx, while Mr Hardy accepted that large numbers of archers were indeed on the wings, extending into the woods on either side.

He said: "I am a great admirer of Mr Bennett's writings, but I think in his book he was wrong about the battle formation. If he has come round to my view, then we



A crossbow abandoned in the thick of the fighting symbolises the supremacy of the English longbow at Agincourt

may well end up agreeing with each other."

Mr Bennett is certain of one thing, that Laurence Olivier's film of *Henry V* got it wrong. "It shows a mass French cavalry charge against the English line whereas they all dismounted after the first attempt," he said. "I shall be

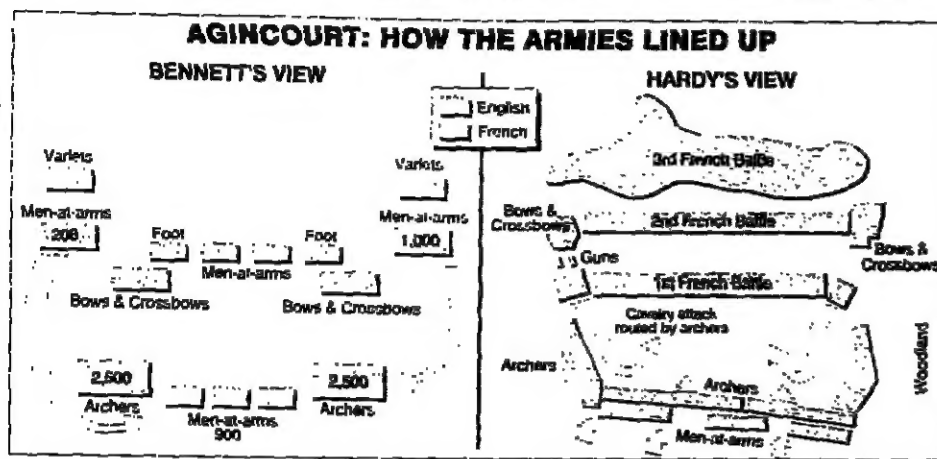
taking along a clip of the film to illustrate the error."

Agincourt has been described as possibly England's greatest military victory. In historical terms, such an assessment is difficult to quantify, but the statistical fact is that Henry V's 5,000 archers and 750 men-at-arms — "we few,

we happy few, we band of brothers" — defeated an army of 22,000 knights and 3,000 crossbowmen under the command of Charles d'Albret, the Constable of France. The English suffered only a few hundred casualties, compared with between 5,000 and 6,000 French fighters killed, and the

victory paved the way for the English occupation of large parts of France. Limited tickets are available for the debate at 11am at Europa House, St Katherine's Way, London; telephone 0203 350763.

Leading article, page 19



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Bellamy condemns slaughter of badgers as a cruel waste

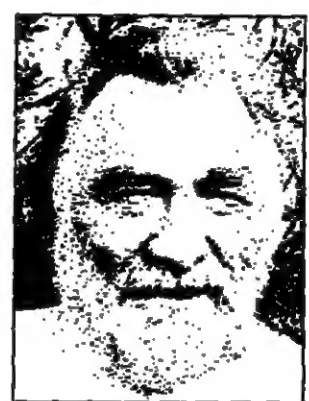
DAVID BELLAMY has condemned as a "cruel waste" the Agriculture Ministry's policy of killing badgers in an effort to stop bovine tuberculosis.

On the eve of a public debate about the controversial policy, he said that after 20 years of culling the disease was on the increase among cattle and there was no proof that badgers transmitted it.

The National Badger Group's call for an immediate halt to the killing prompted the meeting today, at Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust's conservation centre at Robinswood Hill, Gloucester.

Badger lovers, farmers and landowners will take part. Dr John Smith, a ministry vet, will explain the culling policy at the meeting, and the badger expert Dr Warren Cresswell will speak against it. It is estimated that the culling will cost the Government more than £1 million this year.

Conservationists yesterday warned motorists to watch out for amorous male badgers, who are wandering onto roads as they search for mates. Gloucestershire Badger Group said hundreds were being killed.



Bellamy: no proof that badgers pass on TB

Husband jailed for push that killed

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

A MAN whose wife died after he pushed her onto a concrete path during an argument was jailed for a year yesterday, despite pleas for a non-custodial sentence for the sake of their three-year-old son.

Simon Swanton, 27, from Calmore, Hampshire, was convicted of manslaughter earlier this month. His wife Donna, 29, died from a brain haemorrhage eight hours after falling during an argument in November 1993.

Yesterday James Wadsworth, QC, for the defence,

told Winchester Crown Court that the couple's son Oliver would be devastated if his father were jailed. "Oliver is the victim in many ways already. He goes round looking for his mother and he does not yet know why she is not there." But Mr Justice Collins said he must give the crime the punishment it deserved.

Oliver will be cared for by Mrs Swanton's mother, Renate Brown, 52, who condemned the sentence. "He [Mr Swanton] should have got at least five years," she said.

NEWS BRIEF

Driver faces inquiry into Alps deaths

A British coach driver is to be questioned by Austrian police after his bus hit a group of pensioners near the Alpine resort of Zell am See, killing three. Gerald Knox, 59, of Bowburn, Co Durham, was driving a party of 44 British schoolchildren on Thursday when he swerved to avoid an oncoming vehicle and crashed into the pensioners. Several of the children were treated for shock and Mr Knox is being detained in hospital.

Petrol killer

William Sadler, 44, an electrician from West Derby who doused a man and two women in petrol and burnt them to death over a £750 debt, was jailed for life after a jury at Liverpool Crown Court found him guilty of murder.

Case adjourned

A drink-driving case against the Everton footballer Duncan Ferguson was adjourned until March 17. Ferguson, 23, who was not obliged to appear before Liverpool magistrates, is charged with driving with excess alcohol.

Bailiff sentenced

Christopher Weeks, 40, a bailiff from Blackheath, London, who failed to serve an arrest warrant on his girlfriend for failing to buy a television licence, was jailed for three months for perverting the course of justice.

Patient charged

Gary Christopher, 40, a patient at Rampton top-security hospital, appeared in court on two charges of threatening to kill Beverly Allitt, 25, the nurse serving 15 life sentences for killing four children and harming nine others.

Room with a pew

The owner of a Methodist church and school room in Colant, Cornwall, which was closed three years ago, has been granted permission to convert it into a home — as long as she leaves the organ, rostrum and pews in place.

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Police say masterminds behind cold-blooded massacre are still at large

Greysteel killers unrepentant as life sentences begin

By NICHOLAS WATT
IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

LOYALIST gunmen gave the thumbs-up from the dock at Belfast Crown Court yesterday as they were jailed for life for murdering eight people in the Greysteel pub massacre.

Two of the terrorists gave the thumbs-up and all four members of the outlawed Ulster Freedom Fighters shook hands and waved to friends in the public gallery as they were led from the dock. But as they began their sentences at the Maze Prison, near Belfast, police said that the "godfathers" who masterminded the Halloween night killings in October 1993 in County Londonderry were still at large.

Sentencing the four to eight concurrent life terms, Lord Justice Carswell said the attack on the Rising Sun pub, carried out in retaliation for the IRA Shankill Road bomb which had killed nine Protestants a week earlier, had been "one of the most callous and cold-blooded massacres in the catalogue of so many heinous crimes committed in this Province". He did not, however, recommend a minimum period in prison after the men changed their pleas to guilty.

One of the terrorists, Robert Knight, 25, who admitted murdering four Catholic workmen in a separate gun attack at Castlerock, Co Londonderry, in March 1993, was given a further four concurrent life sentences.

During the attack at Greysteel, Knight, an unemployed roofer from Coleraine, stood guard outside the rural bar with a sawn-off shotgun and drove the gunmen away in a car which was later abandoned.

As he was led from the dock he gave the thumbs up with Stephen Irwin, 21, an unemployed labourer from Londonderry, who launched the attack on Halloween revellers in the bar with an AK47 rifle. Irwin shouted "trick or treat" before opening fire, and then paused to reload his



Lord Justice Carswell: no minimum sentence

weapon. Jeffrey Deeney, 24, a labourer, also from Londonderry, fired one round before his 9mm pistol jammed. Brian McNeill, 27, a shirt cutter from Londonderry, drove a second getaway vehicle. A fifth man, Robert Grievie, 25, from Coleraine, was given a two-year suspended sentence for providing Knight with an alibi.

Lord Justice Carswell told the five men that they were responsible for an attack which had "appalled and disgusted all right-thinking people in the community". He said: "Comparing atrocities would be as fruitless as it would be painful. It is sufficient to say that on the scale of barbarities which have been perpetrated by cold-hearted practitioners of violence over the last quarter of a century, the Greysteel murders rank very high."

The judge said that he would not recommend a minimum period in prison for the four terrorists sentenced to life because they had pleaded guilty. He said: "It is a long-established cardinal principle of sentencing that where a defendant has pleaded guilty, accepted responsibility for his crimes and expressed remorse, the court should temper its punishment and reduce to some extent the sentence

which it otherwise [might] have regarded as appropriate." The judge also sentenced McNeill and Deeney for a further 16 and 12 terrorist offences respectively.

After the sentence the detective who led the investigation said that the UFF's "godfathers" remained at large. Detective Chief Superintendent Eric Anderson, the head of CID in the RUC's north region, said: "It is always difficult to get the godfathers who plan, co-ordinate and set up attacks but who never get their hands dirty. They send out other people." Mr Anderson described the team which launched the attack at Greysteel as "formidable".

After the Shankill bombing UFF leaders in the city, under 24-hour surveillance because of police fears of retaliation, demanded reprisals on a similar scale. Sources said that a close associate of one of them, based in Co Londonderry, agreed to carry out the orders. The RUC believes that this man set up a series of meetings to plan the attack, organised at least two dummy runs on the village pub and arranged to have the guns test-fired in a wood hours before the shooting. He did not take part in the attack on the Rising Sun, seven miles outside Londonderry.

Mr Anderson said that the RUC launched a massive investigation after the massacre, involving up to 800 officers. The breakthrough came when officers found a car belonging to one of the terrorists, containing their clothing, which had been abandoned by Knight a mile from the shooting. An incendiary device had failed to ignite and police were left with a largely undamaged vehicle containing important forensic evidence.

Knight was collected by McNeill in a second getaway car. He used his own Skoda and took a wrong turning in the dark. That left Irwin and Deeney to find their own way home after disposing of the weapons in bushes near a shrine.

Relatives of the victims, who were in court for the hearing yesterday, condemned the judge's decision not to recommend a minimum period in jail for the terrorists. Jacqueline O'Doherty, 32, whose mother Moira Duffy, 59, was killed, said: "They were disgraceful sentences. They showed no sign of remorse and winked to each other. These men don't deserve to see daylight."

Rosie Fahey, 55, who still needs hospital treatment after surviving the attack, said: "I thought I wouldn't see them out in my lifetime."



Some of the weapons recovered after the massacre



Robert Knight, top, screams at the crowd after his first remand. He, Jeffrey Deeney, centre, and Stephen Irwin switched their pleas to guilty

Eurostar cuts fares to fill weekend trains

By HARVEY ELLIOTT, TRAVEL CORRESPONDENT

THE Eurostar cross-Channel rail service is to offer a series of cut-price fares in an effort to lure tourists away from airlines. From Tuesday the cheapest fares will be Apex weekend returns to Brussels for £79 and Paris for £84.

The company's new package of "traditional" tickets includes big reductions for those over 60 or under 25. John Segal, its business manager, said: "We don't want to be just like an airline. The railway tradition has always been built on making cheap fares available to those who have retired or who are still exploring the world as students."

At present Eurostar's fares are limited to a £195 first-class return, a £155 standard return and a £95 Apex return, which must be bought 14 days in advance. The prices of the new Apex weekend standard-class tickets, which must also be bought 14 days in advance and include a Saturday night stay, compare with a special offer return to Paris and £99 to Brussels. The normal Apex airline fare is £130 to Paris and £147 to Brussels, although other airlines offer round trips for as little as £65.

Over 60s who hold a Rail Europe Senior Card, which costs £5 a year, will be able to buy a standard-class Eurostar return to Paris for £104 and to Brussels for £99.

Youth return fares, for those under 26, will be £79 to Brussels and £84 to Paris, with single fares half that amount. No special youth card is needed. A reduced fare of £62.50 for standard class will be available for children between 4 and 11.

More than 500,000 people have travelled with Eurostar since the service began in November and it is rapidly increasing the number of trains. Currently about 6,000 people a day travel to Paris, the equivalent of 20 aircraft journeys, and 1,500 travel to Brussels. By late summer Eurostar hopes to run a train from Waterloo to Paris every hour at peak times.

Richard Edgley, managing director of European Passenger Services, which runs Eurostar, said that he was disappointed by the number of passengers to Brussels, but that the Paris route was doing better than expected. He said that the technical failures that have led to a series of embarrassing breakdowns and delays would quickly be overcome.

"We have about the same reliability as the airlines with a third of our services late," he said. "As we are a new service this is to be expected and we are working very hard on overcoming the technical problems, which appear to be confined to individual items of equipment or computer software and which we are assured will drop by a factor of at least ten in the next few weeks."

The high-speed trains also hope to outdo airlines in catering for smokers. The current provision of 78 first-class seats and 120 of the 584 economy seats for smokers, set five years ago, may be reconsidered because of the change in smoking habits. But Mr Edgley said: "On a three-hour journey it is not our intention to ban smoking altogether."

Ferry strike, page 1

Police have words with the car behind

DRIVERS who forget to put on their seatbelts, go too fast or hog lanes are to be warned to step into line by patrol cars carrying a new computerised message system.

Programmed with up to 50 messages, the system will be used by police in West Mercia and the West Midlands. Unmarked patrol cars with video cameras will also record and prosecute reckless drivers.

The message signs, which cost £1,000 each, appear on a panel inside the patrol car's rear windscreen. Messages include "Put your phone down", "Seatbelt", "Reduce your speed", "Do not pass", "Accident ahead", "Follow me" and "Thank you". They can also be switched to display the warnings in French, German, Italian, Spanish and Dutch.

John Burbeck, West Mercia

assistant chief constable, said: "The traffic density often means it would be dangerous to pull people over onto the hard shoulder, which is not the safest place to be. The signs will allow patrol officers to give advice to a lot more people in a short space of time."

He said that the drive to improve standards would focus particularly on bad lane discipline. "Everybody complains about congestion on the roads and is frustrated when their journey takes longer than it needs to," Mr Burbeck said. "But by far the most common reason for tailbacks and delays is poor lane discipline by drivers themselves. There is still a commonly held belief that slow, medium and fast lanes exist on motorways. They do not, and this is the message we will be seeking to get over to motorists."

Rolex rapist is jailed for 11 years

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

A RAPIST who attacked a millionaire's wife after spotting her Rolex watch as she walked her dogs was sentenced to 11 years by the Old Bailey yesterday. Leon Blackwood, 20, followed the 45-year-old American to her house in Belgrave, central London, where he forced his way in and robbed her before raping her.

The victim described how she was led "like a lamb to the slaughter" by her attacker. Judge Goddard, sentencing Blackwood, said that he had refused to acknowledge his offence, which had destroyed the woman's life. An Old Bailey jury took 20 minutes last month to convict Blackwood, who had admitted robbery but had denied rape. The court was told that there was less than a one-in-ten-million chance of the DNA profile of the

rapist matching anyone else in the Afro-Caribbean population.

Blackwood, who had been on parole for burglary, had knocked on the victim's door pretending to ask for directions and had pushed his way in. He snatched her £5,000 Rolex and jewellery and forced her upstairs to her bedroom, where he raped her. He attempted to flee across a roof before being caught by police.

Blackwood's victim said in the witness box: "I knew I would be more isolated up there [in the bedroom], but like a lamb to the slaughter I went up. Throughout the whole thing - from the first moment - I feared for my life." In a later statement read to the court she said that she had become a different person. "My life has changed dramatically. I am not comfortable with my lifestyle any more. I don't want people to see me and I wear no

make-up now. The rape occupies all my thoughts."

Blackwood, of Chelsea, had said that he wanted money to go to the Notting Hill carnival. The jury was told that he had been a difficult child, receiving psychological counselling from the age of 10, and had not worked since leaving school at 14.

The judge acknowledged that Blackwood had had a difficult childhood, but she said that he had failed to recognise the severity of his offence. The victim's statement showed "that many normal activities are now an ordeal for her - hearing the doorbell ring, being alone and walking the dogs".

After the case, Detective Inspector Nick Trevette said that cases of Rolex robbery had become increasingly prevalent. Many London police stations had set up squads to deal with the problem.

Surrogate parents cut legal red tape

By LUCY BERRINGTON

A COUPLE from Manchester have become the first surrogate parents in Britain to gain legal responsibility for their baby without going through conventional adoption procedures. Their "parental order", which bypasses the long, costly and emotional route to adoption, is understood to be the first granted since new surrogacy laws came into effect three months ago.

The husband and wife, who do not wish to be named, had been unable to conceive. They had counselling at a local clinic but through family contacts found a woman willing to be artificially implanted with their own donated sperm and egg. She gave birth to a healthy boy last year.

Christina Buchan, the parents' solicitor,

said: "The reality of what it means to them is only just beginning to sink in. They are obviously delighted and it is an important legal landmark."

The new law, a response to recent rapid developments in the treatment of infertility, came into effect on November 1 last year, three days before the Manchester couple lodged their application for a parental order. Two magistrates granted the order.


Commercial surrogacy, in which women are paid to have babies on behalf of infertile couples, is outlawed, but the new rules allow for easier transfer of legal responsibility when at least one of the couple is a biological parent of the child.

"The new law gives a much speedier, more informal answer. It is a response to the changing climate," Ms Buchan

said. "They had gone through a lot of interviews and checks before they embarked on surrogacy. We advised them of the legal pitfalls."

Couples who already have a surrogate child have until April to obtain parental orders. To qualify they must be married, have paid no fees to the surrogate mother other than expenses, and at least one must be "genetically related" to the child. New surrogate parents must apply for the parental order within six months of the birth.

A spokesman for the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, which regulates fertility clinics, said: "Surrogate arrangements are legally unenforceable. The parental order is a fast-track adoption procedure, designed to ensure people know exactly what they are doing."



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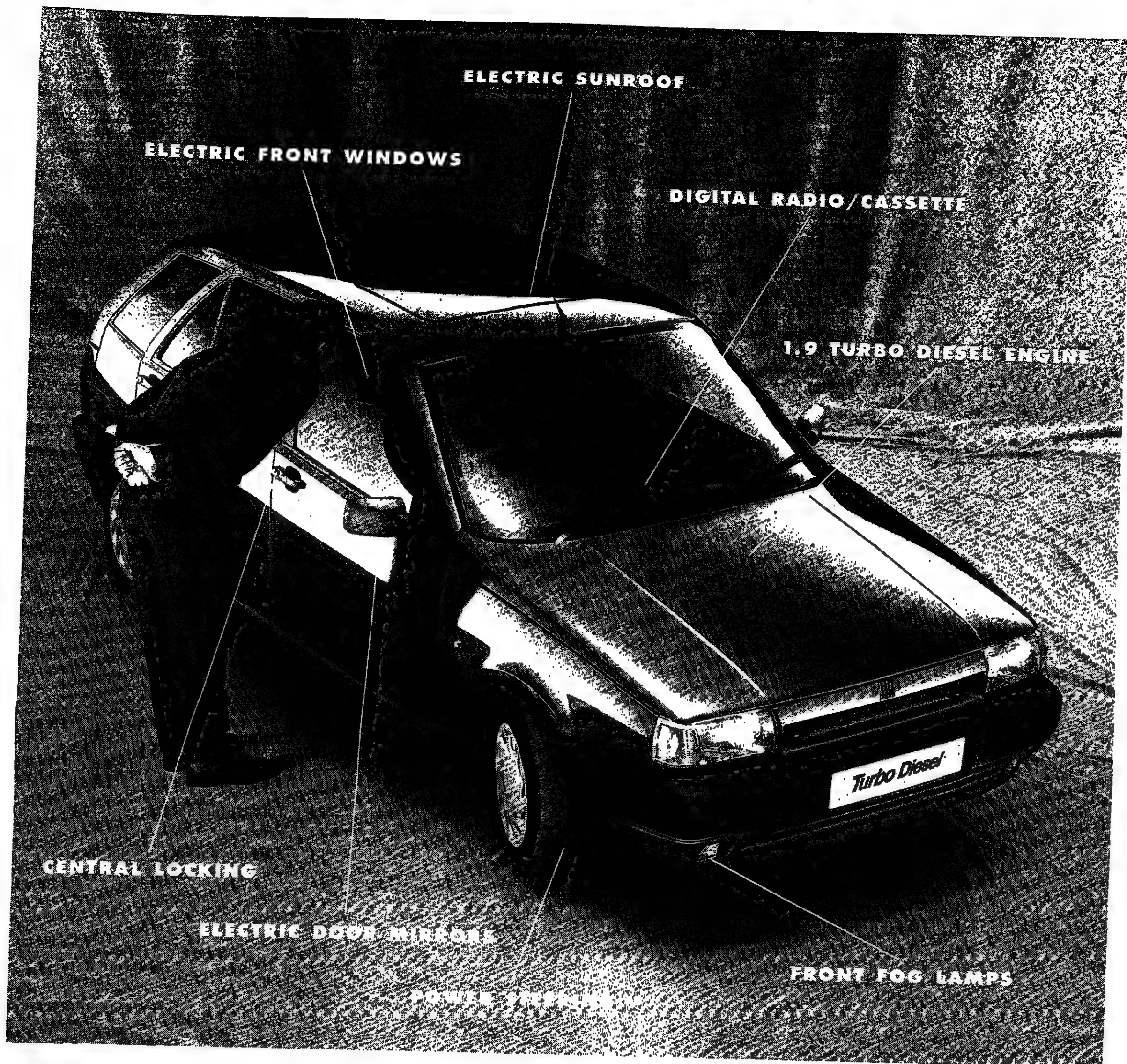
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Technical knock-out for Gorman Bill

Rebels use referendum defeat to fire first shots in new Euro-conflict

By JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

A EURO-SCEPTIC attempt to force the Government to hold a referendum over the inter-governmental conference on Europe's future collapsed yesterday.

The Referendum Bill tabled by Teresa Gorman, the whipless MP for Billericay, suffered a technical defeat. Her attempt to prevent the Bill being talked out failed because there were not enough MPs at Westminster.

Under Commons rules, 100 MPs have to support a motion to bring the debate to a close and enable it to move to the next stage. Only 24 MPs backed Mrs Gorman and two voted against. The Bill now drops to the end of the legislative list.

It did, however, allow Tory Euro-sceptics to attack the Government's policy on Europe ahead of the Labour European debate next Wednesday and the potential knife-edge vote for John Major.

Eight of the nine whipless Tories were in the chamber yesterday; only Sir Richard Body, MP for Holland with Boston, was absent. Few indicated how they would vote next

week, however. Mrs Gorman said yesterday that Britain had undergone a "constitutional revolution" since joining the European Community 20 years ago and now was the time for the people to have their say on the country's future in the community.

Her referendum would have asked if "the UK should continue along the path to a single European government, with a single currency and a single body of law, or remain in the Union but only on the basis of free trade and with a very substantial repatriation of our national sovereignty".

Tony Baldry, a junior Foreign Office Minister, fiercely attacked the Bill, saying it presented an absurd choice and reduced "to the ridiculous, the debate on our future role in Europe". He said however, that Mr Major had not ruled out a referendum when he felt the time was right.

Sir Teddy Taylor (Southend East), another of the whipless rebels, said a referendum would strengthen the authority of the Prime Minister "if he could go to the IGC and say 'I

represent what the British people believe'".

In an impassioned speech, Tony Marlow (Northampton North), a fellow Euro-sceptic, backed the referendum and appealed to the Prime Minister: "In the name of reason, good sense and survival, make yourself clear and make yourself clear now."

The whipless Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton South West) said he could think of no better way of seriously dividing the Conservative Party than holding a referendum. But he added: "This may be, in the last resort, a necessary and extremely undesirable way of resolving the public demand for some say on this issue."

Joyce Quin, Labour spokeswoman on Europe, said she would not support Mrs Gorman's Bill but that Labour would consider a referendum after the IGC if it resulted in proposals for substantial constitutional changes.

Major plea for loyalty, page 1
Peter Riddell, page 18



Teresa Gorman at an interview yesterday. Her Bill was talked out.

Credo

How art, ruled by ethics, can serve worship

Albert H Friedlander

THIS week synagogues have been studying this text from Exodus:

"I have filled Bezalel with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise skillful works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass."

From the very beginning, the artist is placed into the centre of religion. Great popes hire greater artists. The architect Frank Lloyd Wright built synagogues which present the worshippers with more questions than answers. And Bezalel in the Bible built a tent in the wilderness.

Art and religion make strange bedfellows. Both strive towards the ultimate which the religious thinker knows to be beyond reach, but which the artist strives to express. When art is ruled by religion, it cannot exist without ethics and its highest aspiration will be to anticipate the world as it should be, as a Messianic configuration contained within the Divine plan.

Bezalel built a tent in the desert through which Israel wandered for 40 years. The design, the Torah says, was given to Moses by God, making Bezalel more of an artisan — a noble calling — and less of an artist. Judaism is an iconoclastic religion refusing to worship images which imprison and limit the Divine; yet it needs the beauty which in the Torah becomes worship enhanced through calligraphy, and in the sanctuary engages all the senses with the

royal colours of Torah garments, gleaming silver and golden shields and crowns, and with the tinkling of the bells on those crowns. All of it is ancillary to that worship which is study and which rises out of the human condition which is exile from God.

Israel was shaped in the desert, with a knowledge that we are all exiles from the moment we are born until the moment we die. First, we are exiled from God. Then, removal from the mother's womb is exile. The wanderings through the desert were the free choice of leaving an oppressive civilisation and electing the desert instead of the fleshpots of Egypt. The children of Israel were also in exile from themselves, fleeing from tasks and capabilities set into their innermost self. The one place in which they might renew themselves was the tent in the wilderness.

Artists can capture total despair or the rising hope of a moment of revelation, and there are times when religion cannot do without art. Kant's third Critique of

Judgement saw art as the asymptotic embodiment of human, rational and ethical values; and we must cling to that vision when the despair of a later time has art present us with the visions of evil.

In exile, we need the vision of what might yet be; and the shared task of art and religion is presented to us by Bezalel.

Albert Friedlander is dean of Leo Baeck College and Rabbi of Westminster Synagogue.



Danger: feminist persons at work

By JOE JOSEPH

PLAIN-SPEAKING Yorkshire is being given a crash course in political correctness. First the women at Leeds Council were ticked off for calling everyone "luv". Now Wakefield has been bullied into changing a council sign that reads "Men working".

Two female students complained that the sign, on the back of a van used by a council team cleaning roadside drains and gullies, was sexist. Karen Lemm and Christine Armitage felt that the warning to motorists of a hazard ahead, though descriptively accurate, was politically incorrect.

A heavily sighing council official said yesterday: "It's a pity these two girls have nothing better to do. There are 20 people employed on these eight vehicles and none of them are women. They don't want to clean drains."

"There is one additional vehicle in the cleaning service that women use, which is involved in specialist collections from doctors' surgeries. The sign on that vehicle has now been changed to 'Work in progress'."

"Arrangements are made to ensure that the district council's equal opportunities policy is being enacted where appropriate. But in the case of these eight vehicles it's not appropriate because they're all men."

"We have had mayors who were female and they've all been called mayor, not mayor."



Sign language safer?

ess. The chairmen of various council committees are women, but they prefer to be called chairman rather than chair, because chair is a piece of furniture."

Brian Hazell, a Wakefield Conservative councillor, finds the hullabaloo "absolutely unbelievable, it makes me so cross. I'm amazed that the council has pandered to these women. When they are coming out with this sort of nonsense, how can you treat them seriously any more?"

"There has to be an intention to abuse women's rights and this isn't. It's purely a statement of fact — that men are working."

Miss Lemm, 19, an arts student at Bretton College, Wakefield, said: "Although in law women have equal rights, putting signs on vans saying 'Men working' just perpetuates old sexist attitudes. If it said 'Whites working' there would be an outcry. There's no difference between sexism and racism."

German officers on friendship mission

By JOHN YOUNG

THE son of Claus von Stauffenberg, leader of the failed plot to assassinate Hitler in July 1944, will be among a group of retired and serving German officers gathering at a hotel in Rochester, Kent, today.

They will be meeting their British counterparts from all three services under the auspices of the Anglo-German Officers' Association, which is dedicated to developing friendship and reconciliation between the armed forces of the two nations.

The meeting is seen as particularly significant with the approach of the VE Day 50th anniversary and fears that the commemorations may be used to revive old antagonisms.

Generalmajor Berthold

Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg, who retired last year, is a tall, burly, softly spoken man. He describes himself as an intense anglophile and, while serving as military attaché in London, became convinced of the need for more positive reconciliation.

"I have never met a German officer who served in this country and didn't love it," he said yesterday.

Asked whether he agreed with German representation at the VE Day commemorations, Generalmajor von Stauffenberg said that from his point of view it was a good thing that Germany lost the war. "Otherwise I would not be alive today. But as a German, I would not want to go and celebrate someone else's victory."

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Paris spy scandals, fierce economic competition and job fears erode pillars of democracy

Age of uncertainty assails France

By CHARLES BREMNER

FRANCE barely noticed this week when sailors ran riot at the Channel ports. A brief mention on the news reflected the reality that battle with the police is almost the norm for any industrial dispute in a country long given to airing its grievances through "social explosion".

The ugly scenes at Calais and Boulogne, however, offered a useful snapshot of the underlying malaise afflicting a divided France. Its politicians are lurching through a presidential campaign that has turned venomous. Underlying the rhetoric of all the candidates from the champions of the extreme Left and Right is the notion that France badly needs a remedy for what is universally known as *la crise*.

Edouard Balladur, the Prime Minister, and his rivals, recognise this as the two-decade period that has seen an inexorable rise in unemployment to the present level of

12.6 per cent. Beyond the statistics lies the sense that despite general prosperity and one of Europe's strongest economies, France has somehow lost its way.

As far as most French people are concerned, the main culprit is the threat of world competition, a force embodied by the old Anglo-Saxon boogymen. He made his appearance twice this week in the bizarre decision to go public with the panic over American spying. The Americans have now put the wind up some of the biggest French companies by announcing their big institutional investors' plans to break up the cosy dictatorships that pass for French company boards.

The workers at Calais took on Uncle Sam's smaller brother by targeting Meridian, a British ferry company that has given "French jobs" to cut-price Polish seamen.

While the foreign menace is useful for stirring up old-

fashioned Gaullist hackles at election time, it does not explain the widespread belief that the institutions are in trouble as a large chunk of the country feels left out of the race for prosperity. The new schism runs not through the old Left-Right trench, but along the divide between the more educated classes who favour Europe and the new technology, and those who fear for their jobs and recoil from the idea of "France being run from Frankfurt", as Philippe de Villiers, the romantic nationalist candidate puts it.

The worried section of the population, which includes students alarmed that diplomas no longer guarantee jobs, is growing restive. In the latest small-scale strikes, hundreds of Air France staff stopped work on Thursday with a warning that they would tolerate no further cuts as management tries to trim costs at the floundering state airline.

The mood of despair was



Edouard Balladur, the Prime Minister, shakes hands with some of his supporters on the campaign trail in Tours

heightened by the spectacle of the governing and business establishment flouting the rules for their own benefit. Although corruption is by no means as widespread as in

Italy, the prosecution of former ministers, mayors and businessmen all lining their pockets hardly improves morale in a country where civic spirit has always been in short

supply. News over the past week that President Mitterrand's entourage spied on 3,000 journalists, lawyers and other citizens in the 1980s tweaks a sensitive nerve.

Misgivings about the morals as well as the skills of the leadership were sharpened by M. Balladur's conduct in the affair of the bungled telephone bugging, one of those political-

criminal comedies that are a feature of French history. The subsequent slanging match between M. Pasqua and the judiciary has only heightened the feeling that all is not well with the pillars of French democracy.

Raymond Barre, the likely centre-right candidate, summed up a general belief on Thursday, saying: "A financial, political and administrative oligarchy is claiming to be the sole embodiment of the well-being of the nation." Like Jacques Chirac, M. Balladur's Gaullist rival, M. Barre believes France's weak parliament has led to a democratic deficit that has allowed power to be hijacked by the elite. "Our very conception of the democratic state is being thrown into question," he said.

All the candidates, including M. Balladur, the effective incumbent, are promising to heal the social woes in return for winning the *rassemblement* in May, an event that is the key to the run-off in the presidential contest. The Prime Minister, who has suddenly lost his aura of invincibility and is barely ahead of his rivals, is promising "reform without rupture". To the dismay of his erstwhile fans, this is an uninspiring list of tinkering of the kind he has introduced as Prime Minister since 1993.

IG Metall starts strikes in Bavaria

FROM JOHN HOLLAND
IN BERLIN

GERMAN metalworkers began a series of strikes in Bavaria yesterday to press home their demands for a 6 per cent pay rise for the union's 3.5 million members.

After weeks of threats and an overwhelming membership vote, IG Metall, Europe's largest industrial trade union, ended at a stroke an 11-year period of relative co-operation with employers in Bavaria. The walkout is the first by metalworkers there since 1954, and so far it includes 22 industries and about 11,000 workers.

The union plans to add 12 more companies to the list next week if no progress is made. Neither BMW nor Audi, two of the largest car-makers located in Munich and Ingolstadt respectively, are on the strike list.

IG Metall has pitted itself against the Government of Helmut Kohl, the Chancellor, and the Gesamtmetall employers' association, which has so far steadfastly refused to negotiate the union's demands. Norbert Blum, the Labour Minister, told several German newspapers this week that a strike would be a "punch in the eye", which would delay economic recovery "by months".

Union officials argue they have not received a real wage increase in several years. They say that a 6 per cent rise would include 2.5 per cent for inflation and a 3.5 per cent increase for worker productivity.

There was almost a carnival atmosphere outside factories in Nuremberg, Augsburg, Ingolstadt and several other cities yesterday and a confidence that union demands would be met. Since many of the country's biggest companies, including AEG and Siemens, are based in Bavaria, the threat of a powerful leverage.

The employers' association, representing about 8,000 firms, has not set a date for talks, but appears likely to make its first counter-offer early next week.

WORLD SUMMARY

Marchers condemn acquittals

Islamabad: Angered by the acquittal of two Christians sentenced to death for blasphemy against Islam, hundreds of Muslim fundamentalists staged protests in two northeastern cities in Pakistan yesterday.

Police arrested 33 fundamentalists thought linked to a recent surge in sectarian violence. The High Court in Lahore on Thursday dismissed charges against Salamat Masih, 14, and Rehmat Masih, 40. (AP)

Leading article, page 19

Presidency lead for Greek Left

Athens: Greece's parliament yesterday failed to elect a new President for the country in a first round of voting, but Costis Stephanopoulos, supported by the ruling Socialist and a small nationalist party, won 181 votes in the 300-seat house and appeared likely to win the third and final round next month, avoiding an early national election. He was running against Athanasios Tsaldaris, the conservative candidate, who received 109 votes. (Reuters)

Jurassic-era pines threat

Sydney: Park rangers may have to guard 39 Jurassic-era pines in Wollemi National Park after botanists and park service officers found footprints around them and identification tags torn down.

Hikers sneaked into the refuge of the pines, which have survived for millions of years in a rain forest grotto, and it is feared their shoes may carry deadly fungi. (AP)

Top newsmen

Brussels: Finnish journalist Olli Kivinen, who writes for *The Times*, and Briton Kevin Drury, a BBC World Service contributor, won the Association of European Journalists' 30th annual prize. (Reuters)

Neo-Nazis arrested as Germany bans party

By JOHN HOLLAND

GERMANY'S largest remaining neo-Nazi organisation, the Free German Workers' Party (FAP), was banned yesterday. Offices and homes of dozens of members were raided throughout Germany yesterday morning, arrests were made and fascist books, flags and Second World War weapons were seized.

The group's bank statements were impounded and accounts frozen as police sought to dampen criticism that the Government action was far too late and had allowed many neo-Nazis time to slip away. The organisation has been linked to attacks against foreigners and Jews.

In Hamburg, police also raided the offices of a smaller but equally influential group of 30 neo-Nazis known as the National List, best known for

a telephone hotline and computer information network for neo-Nazis.

The two groups' arrested members face charges of violating the constitutional ban on glorifying Nazism through the use of symbols, inflammatory speech, or gestures.

The FAP was described by German interior minister, Manfred Kanther, as an anti-democratic group "which disdains human rights and stirs up xenophobia and racism". Officials said both groups had used their status as quasi-legal parties to spread their messages of hate behind the constitutional protection of free speech.

Critics fear that the neo-Nazi network has not been shut down, but merely displaced, as many members are now organised into small autonomous units.

We're Lands' End Direct Merchants, from America.

At your service, 24 hours a day,
from our UK home in Rutland.

The first thing you should know about Lands' End is that whenever you call, there's a set of ears waiting to listen.

All because, way back when we first started offering our products in the United States, our founder urged us to forget worrying about what's best for the company. Instead, he said bluntly, "worry about what's best for our customers!" So it suits us if you call us exactly when it suits you (although we do take one day off at Christmas).

That same advice still reigns when we started offering our products in the UK. Just as our millions of customers back in the States came to appreciate our stubborn yen for the finest quality products, so have growing thousands of UK citizens. To achieve our customer-conscious task, we had to start shipping from within the UK. So the need for a duplicate home in the UK quickly became imperative.

In August '93, we arrived in Oakham, Rutland. A place where the community spirit and the character and nature of the people we now work with every day so very closely resemble the environment of our original home in Dodgeville.

If we can make something better, we will. Our first principle of doing business is to do everything we can to make our products better. Same goes for the service that gets our products to our UK customers. So now from our Oakham home, our UK customers continue to get products of which we first demand quality. Then, as always, the price must constitute true value. Finally our UK customers receive the same dedicated, sure service which has helped build our reputation in the US.

Call us free today. As to what we mean by service, we've pledged this since we first crossed the threshold at Oakham. You can call us 24 hours a day and speak with a friendly, well-trained British operator whose smile almost sparkles down the line. And when you order, whatever your order, if in stock, it will be out

of our distribution center and with you in just a few short days (and only a little longer if you require monogramming or hemming services). Else we want to know why. (Our freephone number is right here - 0800 220 106 - so feel free to use it.)

We can also promise our UK customers the same significant values that our direct merchant pricing permits - a welcome contrast to those prices that reflect advances to middle-men who hunt the path of most retail merchants.

Finally, there is our world famous GUARANTEE! Our founder, in his simplistic wisdom, read a lot of guarantees before he settled on ours. And he noticed that in general, the more words they used to explain their conditions, the more loopholes seemed to trap the unwary. So, being a no-nonsense guy he first got very specific, to wit:

"We accept any return, for any reason, at any time. Our products are guaranteed. No fine print. No arguments. We mean exactly what we say. In one word, GUARANTEED." (And of course our guarantee is in addition to your statutory rights.)

Then, because that seemed a little wordy, too, he settled on the version we now favor, just plain GUARANTEED.

Having said all this, we invite your challenge.

If you've never window-shopped at one of our advertisements before, make this the occasion to stop a little longer to peruse all that we promise - it's all only a free phone call away.

As in our previous press advertisements, we invite you to send for a free catalog or order right off the page any one or all three of our basic products - each of which has created many satisfied customers since we introduced it in the UK.

The rest is up to you. Like we always say - read on, ponder, and then head for the phone. (We're all ears!) Or, should you prefer, use the coupon that brings you a free catalog filled with page after page of wonderful Lands' End values.



Our Year 'Round Turtle-neck is still priced at just £16.

Not since the original model inched its way up the sands of the Galapagos Islands, has a Turtle been built to sell for a better price.

Details make the difference: the rare seamless neck. (It costs more to fashion but the comfort is worth it.) Taped shoulders keep the shirt looking great for years, whatever happens to the wearer's shoulders!

The fabric: the soft, cozy, easy to care for 100% American cotton we pride ourselves on.

Can be worn alone, or under a skinning sweater, or with a jacket, teamed with jeans. Or, for women, as a slip-on with a skirt. Or whatever. It knows no limits, only opportunities.

Yours to order at no advance in price since we first offered it in 1991.

Turtleneck
Men 100% Cotton
0307 - 1ALA £16.00
Women 100% Cotton
1585 - 2ALS £16.00
(Plus £2.95 per order P&P)
Sizes:
Men: S, M, L, XL
Women: XS, S, M, L, XL
Colors: Black, Burgundy, White, Navy, Red, Royal, Cream
Monogram: (3 initials only) £2.50

To order please call us free on: 0800 220 106 with credit card information (MC/Access, Visa, AMEX, number and expiration date).



How Lands' End re-defined the Attache Case.

Time was when such a case had to be 1) slender, 2) of soft, shiny leather, 3) wrapped around a firm frame, and 4) fashionably expensive.

It was a world in which ageless men (called attachés, of course) carried such cases chained in their wrists, on dead-of-night journeys between world capitals.

Ours was a more plebeian world. We were young people in a young company and we were so busy we took a lot of work home at night - too much to fit into those slender cases which were too expensive for our means anyway.

So, we challenged our soft luggage people. "Give us a case", we said, "that's made of canvas and 1) holds more than it ought to, 2) is easy to carry, and 3) doesn't cost an arm and a leg".

The result: the Square Rigger you see here at £39.50. Still made of the same sailcloth canvas, it has padded handles, carrying strap, a file-size interior, and a key clip that lets you unlock doors without setting your bag down first.

Today, the Lands' End Attache peeks out from beneath a lot of airplane seats, and you'll glimpse it on the pin-striped laps of executives hunkered down in chauffeured limousines.

The price is still luxury, so the rest of us can afford it. And really should, now that we've made it so easy to order one. On with it!

Square Rigger Attache
Colors: Black, Classic Navy, Dark Burgundy, Hunter Green, Olive Drab, Stone Brown
2915 - 3AL1 - £39.50
(Plus £2.95 per order P&P)
Dimensions: 17 1/2" x 13 1/2" x 3 1/2"
Monogram: (3 initials only) £2.50

To order please call us free on: 0800 220 106 with credit card information (MC/Access, Visa, AMEX, number and expiration date).

Our persuasive Chinos could talk you into unknown comfort.

Now you've read this far, you'll have gathered that we demand much of a garment that aspires to wear the Lands' End label. And we're not the types who eagerly embrace fickle fashion fancies.

So for a long time, even though Chinos were 'in', they remained out of our Lands' End catalog.

Classic Chinos looks may have been screen-tested just fine, but we have a habit of checking out the entire performance before we'll write a product into our catalog.

So it was no impromptu appearance that convinced us to put our name to a pair of Chinos. When the perfect fabric finally showed up, the accent was on softness in the form of mercerized long staple 100% cotton which takes kindly to the further mellowing pre-wash we insist on.

And these were to be no will o' the wisp Chinos. They would have the Lands' End reputation for quality and value to live up to. So you'll find all seams are meticulously sewn with 10-12 stitches per inch and belt loops which are there to stay. Even the pockets are expected to earn their keep, so they're made from a trusted sturdy pocket fabric which won't rip or tear.

Why improvise any longer? This is your call to audition the gentle-tough qualities of the Lands' End Chinos. Phone 0800 220 106 for free and they'll be there. We'll be surprised if you're not pleasantly persuaded.

Chinos with Pleated Front
Colors: Dusty Sage Green, Indigo Blue, Khaki, Natural, Slate Blue, Light Tan
Men's even waist sizes: 30" - 44", Plus 32", 33", 37"
Inside leg lengths to 29", 30", 31", 32", 33", 34", 36". Unfinished 38".
Women's USA even sizing: 4 - 20. Inside leg lengths 28", 29", 30", 31", 32". Unfinished 36". *Ask Operator for UK size conversion.
Women 2567 - 7AL3 - £29.50
Men 2355 - 8ALA - £29.50
(Plus £2.95 per order P & P)

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Gratitude and a benevolent press bolster a figure of stability 'more popular than the Pope'

Spain puts faith in Crown

WITH Spain in the grip of seemingly endless political crisis, it is not surprising that eyes should be turning to King Juan Carlos. These are not just the dwindling nostalgists for the era of General Franco, but a minority of weary citizens who, according to polls, wish the popular monarch would step in to give Felipe González, the scandal-stricken Socialist Premier, a nudge towards the electoral door.

"What is the King doing?" screamed the cover of one magazine this week. It reported nothing more than a rumour that Juan Carlos was discreetly working to defuse the ever uglier conflict between Señor González and José María Aznar, the opposition leader. Even that was too much for a royal entourage which, ferociously sensitive to any suggestion of royal meddling, issued angry denials. Since succeeding Franco in 1975 and then fathering the transition to democracy, the Borbón monarch has only once waded in to exercise his role as constitutional arbiter: on February 23, 1981, when he earned the gratitude of the

MADRID FILE

by CHARLES BREMNER



nation by quashing an attempt by military officers to take over parliament. It is a tribute to the success of the Spanish restoration that, two decades on from the King's arrival on the throne as a much-ridiculed dictator's protégé, he is fondly seen as the guarantor of stability and is, according to polls, more popular than the Pope. "He has to do nothing. That's the whole

point," says a distinguished professor of politics. "His role is even less than that of the British Queen."

All the goodwill that surrounds Juan Carlos, 57, and Queen Sofia makes for a tranquillity that the resident of Buckingham Palace could only dream of. Far from the world of rat packs and Squidgy tapes, los reyes are spared the ribald prying that

is the scourge of their English cousins. Apart from the veil that is always drawn over some of the King's extracurricular activities, the media have also trodden very carefully over the matter of his friendship with two of the newly indicted stars of the sleaze saga, Javier de la Rosa, a Barcelona businessman, and Mario Conde, the disgraced boss of the Banesto bank. Both are awaiting trial for stashing away illicit fortunes. There has been only timid mention of the lavish gifts from the disgraced business set, including a Porsche car.

This week, the King has escaped public ribbing over the latest of a long history of mishaps. He turned up for official duties with his right arm in plaster after fracturing his wrist while skiing in the Pyrenees. The limb will pose a ceremonial problem next month when the accident-prone monarch accompanies Princess Elena, 31, up the aisle of Seville Cathedral. The Infanta's wedding to Jaime de Marichalar, a banker, is the first among the three royal offspring.

Rebel with applause

SO YOU thought the end of history had killed the supply of guerrillas suitable for worship by Western youth? Well-to-do Madrid teenagers have discovered their 1990s version of Che Guevara, whose poster was de rigueur on their parents' walls. He is Subcomandante Marcos, the

eloquent, pipe-smoking head of the Zapatista rebels in the Mexican state of Chiapas. The fact that he always sports a mask has not stopped young madrileños scrambling to buy T-shirts with his profile and the slogan: "Todos Somos Marcos" (We are all Marcos).



King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia enjoying a spot of plain sailing

Lesson in olé matrimony

WHEN it comes to lavish nuptials, the Spanish royal family will be hard put next month to match the sumptuous spectacle just offered by the wedding near Seville of a star bullfighter and one of the country's most popular singers.

The marriage of toreros and flamencos is part of eternal Spain, but with bullfighting now a big-money branch of showbusiness, it was inevitable that the wedding of José Ortega Cano and Rocio Jurado would trigger a paroxysm of hype.

For months, the fans have been thrilling to the romance of what some of the media call the strange couple. Señor Ortega, 40, is a respected classical matador long known as a confirmed bachelor. Señora Jurado is a romantic songstress with an imposing figure who is ten years his senior. With her heart set on a church wedding, the bride won an annulment of her existing marriage. The ceremony was delayed somewhat by the refusal of priests to officiate and by a goring Señor Ortega received from a bull in Colombia last month.

Elizabeth Taylor could have picked up a few tips from the £500,000 ceremony, on an estate near Seville recently bought by Señor Ortega. With helicopters hovering overhead, some 1,800 guests and Señora Jurado's 18-year-old son watched on closed circuit television as the couple turned up two hours late in horse-drawn carriages.

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General tells how Eta plot to kill King was foiled

FROM EDWARD OWEN IN MADRID

A RETIRED Spanish general revealed yesterday how an illegal security operation foiled a plan by Eta, the Basque separatist group, to kill King Juan Carlos.

Lieutenant-General Antonio Sáenz de Santa María, 75, spoke of the operation in an attack against the current judicial investigation into dirty-tricks operations carried out by the security forces against Eta. Six security officials are already in custody.

The general was director of the Civil Guard between 1983 and 1987 when death squads, allegedly financed by Madrid, killed 27 suspected Basque separatists in southwest France. He revealed yesterday that if it had not been for such illegal operations, the King could have been assassinated in November 1986 and Eta would have a huge arms factory.

In an extensive interview in *El País*, he castigated the conservative opposition Popular Party for an "obscene" attack on the Socialist Government over its alleged financing of the death squads. The general described how he could be accused of several crimes in saving the King's life. "I heard from my intelligence services that Eta wanted to buy some ground-to-air missiles to shoot down the aircraft [of the King] when it was landing at Fuenterrabia, very near to the frontier. Having got this information, I used funds from the national reserves — they could also accuse me of not paying VAT

on them — to get in touch with a well-known arms trafficker with access to foreign secret services in a Middle Eastern country, who bought the missiles. I could be accused of arms trafficking."

According to the general, his agents bought two missiles, removed the explosives and put two radio transmitters inside instead with some fake explosives. He then used a van to drive the missiles, on Eta's instructions, via Portugal to San Sebastian, where the transmitters were activated near the airport. "Collaboration with an armed gang," the general said, citing another action that could be viewed as criminal.

Finally, the missiles were collected and Civil Guard agents illegally followed the signal into France. The transmitters led the general and his agents to the Sokoa furniture factory in Hendaya just over the French border. French police knocked down a wall and found not only the missiles but Eta's headquarters and main arms factory.

The Interior Ministry in Madrid confirmed yesterday that at that time the King had been due to arrive by plane at the nearby Fuenterrabia airport.

In *El País*, the retired general dismissed any criticism about such security operations that break the law. "The end does not justify the means, they say. Of course it justifies them. What are not justified are murders and letting them happen."

Festival marred by 'fake rescue'

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS IN ROME

SCANDAL threatened the annual San Remo song festival on the Italian Riviera yesterday when its popular showman, Pippo Baudo, was accused of trying to boost TV ratings by staging the rescue of an apparently suicidal audience member.

Signor Baudo, the highest paid showman in Italy, became even more of a hero for millions of Italians on Thursday when he was shown persuading Pino Pagano, the young spectator, not to leap to his death from the gallery of the festival set, the Ariston Theatre.

"Pippo, I am desperate," the young man told the presenter. But he agreed to climb down after Signor Baudo promised he would not be arrested. Signor Baudo embraced the young man as he apparently decided to live. But Alberto Castagna, a critic and rival presenter, denounced the drama. "It was all studied, prepared on the drawing board," he said.

Police described Signor Pagano as a compulsive liar who had a vendetta against one of the festival's sponsors. Critics said the saga showed that security was poor.



Andreotti: denies he was Mafia member

Andreotti lawyers ask for switch

Palermo: Lawyers defending Giulio Andreotti, the former Italian Prime Minister, on charges involving the Mafia, yesterday asked a preliminary hearing in Palermo, the Sicilian capital and Cosa Nostra's stronghold, to move any possible trial to a special tribunal in Rome.

The preliminary hearing must decide whether Signor Andreotti should be tried on charges alleging that he was a fully fledged "man of honour" (mafioso). The hearing began yesterday at the city's heavily guarded central court after four months of delays to give the defence time to read prosecution documents.

Signor Andreotti denies the charges. After the defence submission on the venue, the hearing was adjourned until next Thursday. (Reuters)

Defence outline by Hurd

Britons take quake in the

Budget vote lifts Russian hope of raising IMF loan

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

RUSSIA'S economic prospects improved dramatically yesterday when parliament passed the third of four readings of the budget, smoothing the way for a key multibillion-pound International Monetary Fund stand-by loan.

Deputies in the Duma, the Lower House, passed the budget after months of uncertainty and weeks of pessimistic economic indicators—notably rising inflation and a falling rouble. At the same time, Russian and IMF teams resumed their loan negotiations.

Anatoli Chubais, the jubilant First Deputy Prime Minister responsible for economic affairs, described the 248,000 billion rouble (£37 billion) budget as a tough, anti-inflationary package that corresponded exactly to IMF demands to bring down inflation and curb the deficit.

"This fully corresponds to the most strict requirements of the IMF," the reform-minded minister said. "This is why we have grounds to believe that talks with the fund will be successful," he added. Although no details were avail-

able of the first session of negotiations, the IMF signalled that a deal for a £4 billion loan was close at hand when it confirmed that Michel Camdessus, its managing director, would visit Moscow next month to conclude the deal with Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Russian Prime Minister.

Assuming that the Duma passes the budget at its fourth reading and Russia clinches the IMF loan, President Yeltsin may be in a position to get his country's economic reforms back on track after weeks of confusion which has been provoked by the fallout from the 11-week war against the secessionist administration in the Caucasus republic of Chechnia.

Russia's military campaign against the forces of General Dzhokhar Dudayev is expected to have cost several billion pounds in additional military expenditure, emergency aid relief for refugees and reconstruction of destroyed property. The war also dented President Yeltsin's credibility as a reformist democrat and

shook Western confidence in his rule.

The prospect of an IMF approval would mean more than simple backing for Russia's 1995 budget. It would send a clear signal to the Kremlin that Western donor nations, and America in particular, are still prepared to back Mr Yeltsin and put the bloody events of Chechnia behind them.

Although heavy fighting continued in the republic yesterday, with Russian gunners pounding rebel Chechen positions around Grozny, the capital, Washington has made clear that it will continue to give its support to the present Russian leadership.

Strobe Talbott, a Deputy US Secretary of State, said in an important policy speech on Russia in Washington on Thursday night that the conflict in the Caucasus should not affect "the big picture" of support for Russian reforms.

Addressing the annual Arms Control Association dinner, Mr Talbott conceded that the conflict had been "a personal and political debacle"

for the Russian leader, but emphasised that it should not affect America's financial support for reforms in Russia.

"What we should not do is to treat each and every disagreement we have with the Russians as some sort of final, high-noon showdown that puts the entire relationship, including support for reform, on the line," the former journalist told the meeting. In a reference to the US aid package of more than £500 million which has been earmarked for the former Soviet Union this year.

Mr Talbott was responding in part to threats by right-wingers in the Republican-dominated Congress to halt American funding to Russia because of the war in Chechnia and Moscow's agreement to build nuclear power reactors for Iran.

"Threatening to pull the plug on our reform assistance programmes is a card we can play exactly once," Mr Talbott said. "Having done it, we will not be able to do it—or even plausibly threaten to do it—again."

Britain and US firm on sanctions

BRITAIN and America yesterday reaffirmed their determination not to relax any of the United Nations sanctions against Iraq, nor to allow any let-up in the political pressure on Saddam Hussein.

Madeline Albright, the American Ambassador to the UN, flew to London for a brief meeting yesterday with Douglas Hurd, the Foreign Secretary, at the start of a tour of Europe and the Middle East, where she hopes to drum up support for America's hardline stance. The Foreign Office said afterwards that both had agreed on the need to maintain the pressure on Iraq. "Saddam Hussein remains untrustworthy; the leopard has not changed his spots. There is no case for a relaxation of sanctions."

Britain and America are worried that several Security Council members are pushing for the lifting of sanctions when a report on Iraqi compliance with resolutions on the scrapping of weapons of mass destruction is submitted on April 10.



President Klesil of Austria meets the star Sophia Loren at this year's Vienna Opera Ball

Inquiry into Euro tourism bribery

FROM WOLFGANG MÜNCHAU IN BRUSSELS

THE European Commission yesterday became the target of a police inquiry for the second time this week, when officers began investigating an alleged bribery scheme within the tourism unit.

The revelations are bound to lead to further criticisms about fraud in the European Union, particularly about the way in which internal inquiries are handled. In this case, the internal investigation had been going on for several years before yesterday's official announcement that the Commission had lifted the diplomatic immunity of three officials so that fraud squads from Belgium and France can mount a full inquiry.

Earlier this week, Belgian police searched the offices and home of Karel van Miert, the European Competition Commissioner, in connection with the Agusta helicopter bribery affair, which has implicated large sections of the Flemish Socialist Party.

Mr van Miert, a former party chairman, denies that he has been involved in any wrongdoing.

The tourism unit investigation began in 1990, designated European Year of Tourism. The agency was set up in 1989 to promote tourism in Europe and to award contracts to the private sector.

It is alleged that the officials had demanded and been given bribes by firms that received contracts under the agency's £6 million budget in 1990.

In at least one case, the bribe was believed to have been worth 30 per cent of the contract. The Commission did not give details about the total amount of the alleged bribes.



Hurd: wants Britain to help to set agenda

Defence outline by Hurd

FROM GEORGE BROCK IN BRUSSELS

BRITISH involvement in a European military intervention force available for humanitarian or civil war emergencies will be outlined by Douglas Hurd, the Foreign Secretary, next week.

He is to address an audience of foreign policy experts in Berlin the day before John Major is to defend his European policy in a Commons debate that is likely to see the Government struggling to muster a majority.

Mr Hurd and Malcolm Rifkind, the Defence Secretary, have been developing ideas for closer European co-operation in peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance since last summer. At the same time, their officials have been floating ideas with other European Union governments, particularly the French.

Both ministers hope that Britain can help to set the agenda on defence co-operation during the European Union's 1996 Inter-Governmental Conference. However, large differences still separate France and Britain over how far the Union should become involved in decision-making over defence.

Britons take Cyprus quake in their stride

FROM MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA

THOUSANDS of Greek Cypriots slept in the open for the second time last night, fearing that the most powerful earthquake to hit the island in nearly half a century would be repeated.

A quake measuring 5.2 on the Richter scale struck shortly before midnight on Thursday, killing an elderly Greek Cypriot couple. It caused relatively little damage, but widespread panic. The island's telephone system, already under increased pressure from residents checking on relatives and friends, was flooded by calls from Cypriots living in Britain, Australia and South Africa. The southwestern coastal area of Paphos, which bore the brunt of the quake, is popular with British tourists and home to about 5,000 Britons.

The domed village church and several houses in the village of Goudhli, 20 miles north of Paphos, were badly damaged. In nearby Pano Arodhes, the worst-hit village, half the houses collapsed and people were sleeping in tents, fearing a repeat of the earthquake of 1953, which killed 64 people. Some British tourists slept on sunbeds around hotel

pools, but many made light of their experience. The British High Commission said no Britons were injured and it was not advising tourists to leave. With holidaymakers the mainstay of the island's economy, attracting a million Britons a year, the Cypriot authorities were keen to allay fears.

The parents of GMTV presenter Penny Smith, who are retired in Ayios Neophytos village, said the quake was "a fair old shock" but it had failed to terrify many elderly retirees who had lived through the blitz. Christine Smith said: "We've been married for nearly 40 years and at last the earth moved for us."

Sotiris Kramvis, a senior geophysicist, said another large earthquake was unlikely. Most of the damaged buildings were old, and tourist hotels and blocks of flats were mainly modern ferro-concrete structures.

Government quits: The coalition Government of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus has resigned after disagreements over a property law, the Turkish-Cypriot TAK news agency said. (Reuters)

Oleg Gordievsky.

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FROM GWEN ROBINSON IN TOKYO

Hertz

Wavering Democrat jeopardises budget vote

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

THE fate of the most radical element of the Republicans' *Contract with America* hung in the balance last night after a key senator withdrew his support and the White House mounted a final effort to defeat it.

Senate Republicans need a two-thirds majority, or 67 votes, to approve a constitutional amendment mandating a balanced federal budget by 2002, but they suffered a serious setback when Sam Nunn, a Georgia Democrat, said that he could not support the amendment without significant changes.

That left Republican Whips trying to muster support for the proposals put forward by Newt Gingrich, the Republican Speaker of the House of Representatives, with 65 definite Republican and Democrat votes. Four Democrat senators were undecided about how to vote on Tuesday. The White House sought desperately to prevent the four from defecting. Robert Rubin, the Treasury Secretary, and President Clinton's other top economic aides denounced the proposed amendment as an "horrendous economic policy" that would put the Administration in an economic strait-jacket and cause deep recession.

Republicans said all previous efforts to curb Washington's profligacy had failed, and this was the only way to prevent the country becoming hopelessly indebted. The amendment has been approved by the House, and would require ratification by three-quarters of the states if it were passed by the Senate.

The Independent Congressional Budget Office calculates that \$1,200 billion (£755 million) of spending cuts or extra revenues would be needed over the next seven years to balance the budget. The entire federal budget is \$1,500 billion a year.

Just how difficult that would be politically was demonstrated

ed this week when Republican-controlled committees voted to eliminate \$21 billion — a comparatively tiny sum — from the present budget approved by the previous Democratic Congress. They pruned everything from school lunches and public broadcasting to housing programmes for the poor and heating subsidies, provoking howls of protest from Democrats.

The Republicans acquired their first 1996 presidential candidate yesterday, when Phil Gramm, a Texas senator, announced he would stand. His campaign had been given a flying start by a record-breaking \$4.1 million fundraising gala the previous night.

At rousing rallies in Texas, his native Georgia and New Hampshire, Mr Gramm announced he would run on a platform of uncompromising fiscal rectitude. He said that Washington's profligacy was destroying the American dream, and promised not to seek a second term unless he balanced the budget within four years.

Mr Gramm, 52, also pledged, if elected, to end immediately all "affirmative action" programmes providing special treatment for racial minorities. This is rapidly becoming the issue with which the Republicans plan to break the fragile Democratic coalition, and Mr Clinton has been forced to take action this week.

He has ordered an "intense, urgent review" of all such federal programmes to determine which can be jettisoned. If the Republicans seek to overturn the ones that genuinely tackle discrimination, the Democrats will brand them racists.

□ Ottawa: Warren Christopher, the US Secretary of State, who spent the night in a hospital here because of a bleeding stomach ulcer, was due to return to Washington last night where he will be admitted to hospital. (Reuters)



Eavesdropper: a plane perches on the roof of a house near Tuscaloosa, Alabama, after it ran out of fuel in mid-air. The pilot was unhurt

Victims get rights to attacker's story

Washington: James Brady, the former White House press secretary, and two others wounded in the 1981 attempt to assassinate President Reagan have obtained the rights to the gunman's life story in one of America's strangest legal settlements (Martin Fletcher writes).

John Hinckley, who is locked up in a mental institution, surrendered the rights to the three men this week to end a 13-year lawsuit seeking millions of dollars in compensation. They intend to hawk the story to publishers and Holly-

wood. If they sell it, they will enrich not only themselves but the man who shot them.

Mr Brady and his fellow victims will keep 80 per cent of the proceeds up to \$2.9 million (£1.8 million). All the rest will go into a trust fund for Hinckley, who has agreed to co-operate fully with potential biographers.

Hinckley shot and wounded Mr Reagan outside a Washington hotel, apparently to impress the actress Jodie Foster, with whom he was obsessed. He was found not guilty by reason of insanity.



President Reagan moments after he was shot in 1981

Coyotes close in on New York

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

THE long-suffering citizens of New York now have to contend with the possibility of finding wild coyotes roaming the streets.

Two of the animals, sometimes known as prairie wolves, were found dead in the city's northern reaches earlier this month, and a third is believed to be living in a cemetery near the Bronx Zoo. A local couple fed the animal with leftover spaghetti, believing it to be a stray dog.

Once a fixture of the Wild West, coyotes have spread from the southwestern states to great swaths of North America as forests have been felled and wolves, their natural rivals, disappeared.

The coyote eats rabbits, rodents, birds and other small animals, as well as larger dead animals in winter. In recent years, they have been seen in Los Angeles, Chicago and Philadelphia and specialists say it is only a matter of time before they establish themselves in New York.

Lawyer risks jail in O. J. trial outburst

FROM GILES WHITTELL IN LOS ANGELES

A PROSECUTOR in the murder trial of O. J. Simpson came near to being jailed when he took almost half an hour to apologise after being cited for contempt of court.

It was an episode of startling petulance and heavy breathing towards the end of a week of such tedious testimony that court observers were seen nodding off. Christopher Darden, the Deputy District Attorney, lost his temper when discussing a video of police working at the scene of the murders of Nicole Brown Simpson, the defendant's former wife, and Ronald Goldman, her friend.

Frustrated after hours of nit-picking — and in his view misleading — cross-examination of Detective Tom Lange by Johnnie Cochran, the Defence Attorney, Mr Darden rose to Mr Cochran's bait at a conference held out of the jury's earshot. "They obviously haven't tried any cases in a long time and obviously don't know how," Mr Cochran had said, attempting to dismiss prosecution objections to the

video. Mr Darden took it as a personal insult, replying: "Who is he talking about, doesn't know how to try a case?" He then interrupted the judge three times, refused to apologise when cited for contempt of court, and asked permission to consult his own lawyer.

Judge Lance Ito invited him to take three, then ten, "deep breaths". Grudgingly, Mr Darden at last apologised, leaving a delighted Mr Cochran to tell reporters afterwards: "It was an incredible day. I'm happy, and I'm going home."

The episode was a tactical coup for the defence, which may have lost a crucial witness earlier in the week. Kathleen Bell, who claims Detective Mark Fuhrman made racist remarks to her in the mid-1980s, has said she will not testify unless subpoenaed. Mr Fuhrman's alleged racism is central to defence claims that police framed Mr Simpson, who pleads not guilty to the murders. The trial continues on Monday.

WORLD SUMMARY

Britain to give aid for camps

London: Britain is to provide £500,000 towards a plan to improve security in the camps for Rwandan refugees in Zaire, where gunmen supporting extremist Hutu nationalism have been terrorising the population and preventing them from returning home (Michael Binyon writes). The grant, announced by Baroness Chalker, the Overseas Development Minister, coincided with a three-day visit to Britain by Faustin Twagiramungu, the Rwandan Prime Minister. He left yesterday evening for Belgium after talks with ministers.

Murder gang members shot

Cape Town: South African police have shot and killed three men linked to the murder of a British colleague last month. Steven Rainbird, 32, from Sussex, was shot in the chest on January 31 on a wine estate near Stellenbosch, where he was taking part in an exchange programme. Police said the three men were killed after a car chase, and three others were arrested. (Reuters)

Russia eases law on HIV

Moscow: The Russian parliament yesterday passed an amended version of a controversial draft law, dropping a provision requiring all visitors to prove that they do not have HIV, the virus that can cause AIDS. The draft law now stipulates that only those coming to Russia for more than three months need certificates showing that they are free of HIV. (Reuters)

On the scent

Paris: French customs have discovered a British ring dealing in fake French perfumes. Customs officials said yesterday. A traffic inspection at a toll road in southwestern France found 7,320 bottles of perfume in a British van bound for Spain. Two unidentified Britons have been detained. (AFP)

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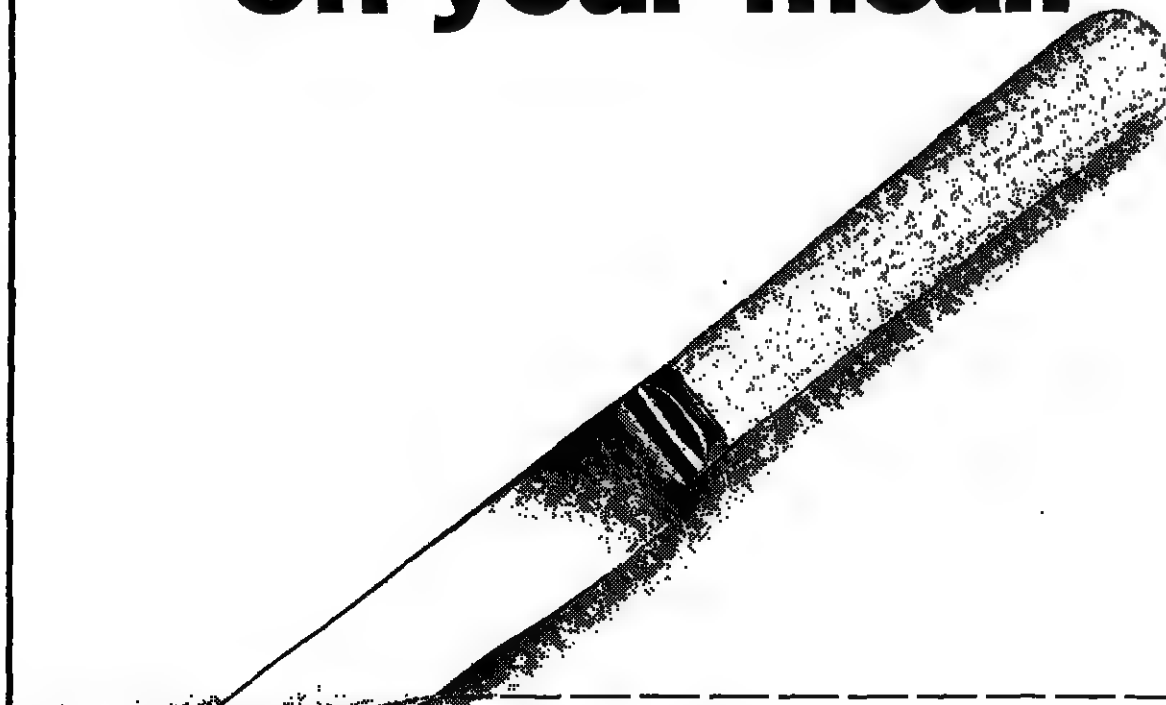
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Bernard Levin says the self-regarding luvvies of the theatre world should just get used to the slings and arrows of outrageous critics

A critical pasting is small Fry

If you ain't praisin' them, they ain't listenin'. That wise and true aphorism must have been coined in the United States, not a dozen steps from Broadway or perhaps Hollywood, by a cynic who had studied the theatre closely, and truth to tell, there is really nothing more to say on the subject, though of course I shall say a great deal on it, starting now. For, of course, it is not only the American theatre luvvies who apparently cannot abide the heat yet still demand to enter the kitchen, it is ours, too.

Only a week or two ago, I watched a television programme by Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie; it was very funny indeed, and its funniness was swift, fresh and ingenious. The studio audience laughed long and loud (and genuinely), and I am sure the laughter echoed up and down the land, and rightly.

But soon, they weren't listenin', because we weren't praisin' them.

The motto of the theatre is "The show must go on" (though cynics have been heard to murmur "Why?"), but to give the theatre its due, it really does make sure that the customers never have to be told that the curtain will not go up tonight. But the trouble with that pledge is that it does not take account of the quality of what is to

be seen when it does go up. And that is where the critics come in.

If you ain't praisin' them, they ain't listenin'. In this eternal ding-dong ("My play is an imperishable masterpiece, is it not?" "No, your play is a heap of garbage, I'm sorry to say"), the playwright must always lose. The reason he must always lose is — well, I said it nearly a year ago, and I might as well resurrect it now:

... the truth is plain to see, but is never told — never — not by playwrights, not by actors, not by producers, nay, not even programme-sellers, and, incredibly, the truth is never told by the critics either. That terrible truth — that must-not-be-revealed is that week in and week out, month in month out, year in and year out, at least 90 per cent of new plays are rubbish without a redeeming feature, and everyone in and around the theatre knows that to be true.

I don't know who coined the term "luvvies", but it is appallingly useful,

particularly, of course, in the theatre, where deadly enemies embrace, crying, "Darling, you were wonderful!" Now, I have been a theatre critic three times, and to my great astonishment, every time I found that if I praised a play highly, the author and the cast made clear that I was a most perspicacious man and beautiful to boot, whereas if I said of a play that it was a load of ludicrous trash, the author and cast put it around that I was an ignoramus with halitosis.

Again, I say, "If you ain't praisin' them, they ain't listenin'." The critics, I learn were not overwhelmed with the performance of Stephen Fry in *Cell Mates* (I have not seen it, so I cannot comment on his performance). Anyway, he fled the



Fry: did not listen to nanny

country. I wonder if it had been hailed as the greatest performance since Henry Irving, whether he would have been signing autographs at the stage door till dawn. But the performance would have been the same. Surely nanny told him in his pram that he could not have his cake before he had finished his bread and butter?

If I were a cold and stern adjudicator instead of the cuddly figure you would do well to ignore the reviews or — better still — not read them. (Sticks and stones can break my bones, but ... remember?) And anyway, I have just gone through these "terrible" reviews, and they made me gasp at their pleasant

tone, their mildness, their encouragement and their painlessness.

Ho! Mr Fry wasn't around when I was riding high on the waves of affronted playwrights and players: if he had been, he would long ago have announced that he was going to be a bee-keeper for the rest of his life, stings and all. For in those days, the things that passed for plays would make a man's teeth fall out, let alone his hair. My lifelong friend Robert Muller was the critic for the *Daily Mail*, and I for the *Daily Express* (we were delightfully dubbed "The Koshers Butchers"), and sometimes we were lucky to avoid being murdered.

But look at them now! There's John Gross, the nicest man in England; Jack Tinker, who wouldn't hurt a fly-tower; Benedict Nightingale, who will roar you as gently as any sucking dove, he will roar you as 'twere any nightingale; Michael Billington, who is always teetering on the brink of talking about the Zeitgeist; this lot of pasties couldn't make an actor cry

even if he had a lump of grit weighing half a ton in his eye.

Bah! In days of yore, an actor who got above his station was in danger of being whipped through the streets at the cart's tail and having his ears cut off into the bargain. Myself, I wouldn't go that far, and I suppose docking his pay for a month would make hardly a dent. Moreover, the hoo-ha by now must be worth a quarter of a million or so in advertising, and if I were a very suspicious man, I might even think that somebody — a spare Saatchi, perhaps — had had an idea and suggested that a play about George Blake the traitor might not actually have the customers storming the box office without something to spice it up. (So it is most fortunate that I am not a very suspicious man.) But Shakespeare must have the last word:

Tis ten to one, this play can never please

All that are here: some come to take their ease.

And sleep an act or two ... Surely not. Anyway, come back, Mr Fry, all is forgiven, and from luvvie to luvvie, nobody will upbraid you.

● Bernard Levin writes in *The Times* regularly on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Major's tough balancing act

Peter Riddell on divisions beyond next week's European vote

John Major is fated to be stuck in a political quagmire. No sooner does he feel secure — after the Cabinet truce on Europe and his widely praised handling of Northern Ireland — than the ground begins to give way again. He faces a close vote in the Commons next Wednesday over Europe. The odds are still that the Government will win then, or in a confidence vote the following day, if only because the nine whipless Tory Euro-rebels will be reluctant to join so blatant a Labour manoeuvre to highlight Tory divisions. But any sense of triumph is likely to be short-lived.

These confrontations have become familiar since the last election — not only during the Maastricht saga but since then over the European Budget Bill. Each time there have been several days of melodrama. The Government's fate is said to hang in the balance, by a knife edge, or whatever the cliché of the day is. Mr Major has survived, but at a big, and cumulative, cost to his standing. How many times can the trick be repeated?

This time, the brinkmanship is likely to continue until Wednesday evening. The Ulster Unionists and the Euro-rebels will keep up the suspense to extract maximum concessions from Mr Major, as well as maximum publicity. In his vivid appeal for the party "to get up off its knees", Mr Major said yesterday he expected every Tory MP to be in the lobby supporting him, not out on College Green squabbling in front of the cameras. But the broadcasting studios will be busy. Tory divisions over Europe will again be underlined, as they were yesterday over Teresa Corman's referendum Bill.

Mr Major's decision raises the stakes but he had no choice. The Tory party is so split that only he can present the painfully constructed compromises designed to keep the party together. Everyone else is seen as in one camp or another. Mr Major has said Britain will oppose any major constitutional changes at the inter-governmental conference due to start next year and

will not join a single currency in 1996-97 even if one is formed then.

That is not far enough for the Euro-sceptics who want participation in a single currency to be ruled out for ever. But that would be unacceptable to Kenneth Clarke and the pro-Europeans. They are prepared to go along with the current position, but only so long as the option of joining is left open.

Mr Major has little room for manoeuvre. There will no doubt be nudges in the direction of the Euro-sceptics, like Mr Hurd's remark yesterday that the decision would not have to be taken for four or five years. And there may be further hints of a possible referendum, though this is still opposed by Mr Clarke and Michael Heseltine.

In the end, the outcome will depend on how far the nine

Euro-rebels are prepared to push Mr Major before falling into line. The nine Ulster Unionists are now even less predictable. Angered by Wednesday's framework document, they want to show they cannot be taken for granted. But they know they cannot expect any favours from a Labour government. In the past, the Unionists have been willing to wave their orange banners but only to strike when a government is about to collapse.

Even if Mr Major survives next week, there will be plenty of tests ahead — the Perth and Kinross by-election, the local elections in May, the Scott and Nolan reports in the spring, let alone further Euro-hurdles. The Tories' parliamentary position is likely to become ever more precarious, and any display of unity will be fragile. His own leadership could be challenged, though no likely successor stands a better chance of bringing together such a fractious party. When Mr Major urged the Cabinet to unite over Europe ten days ago after the public airing of differences, he waved a press cutting saying the Tories were handing victory to Tony Blair. Next week's vote is unlikely to change the course of that campaign.

Everyone is now seen as being in one camp or another

Our infinitely adaptable mother tongue is now the world's lingua franca — and not before time

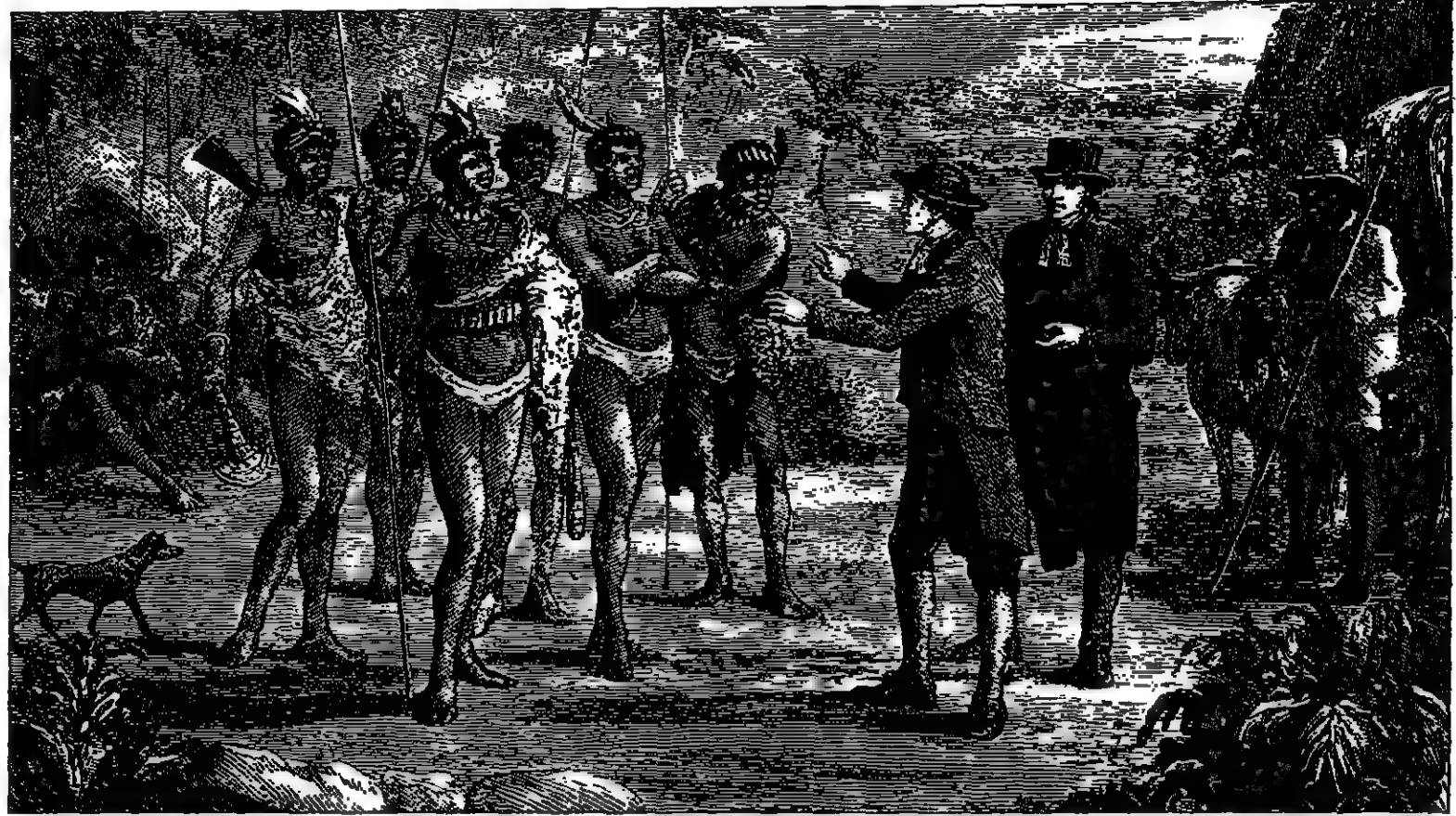
Sensational news from across the Atlantic. Representative Peter King this week introduced a Bill into Congress declaring that "English be the official United States language". He wants all federal support for other languages and bilingual programmes to cease forthwith. English, says Mr King, is the "the bond that unites the American people".

This is the moment for which the British have been waiting since the Boston Tea Party. Pitt is cheering in his grave. The Spanish dogs are cringing in their lairs. As for the French, pouff! They are nowhere to be seen. Their response on Thursday was to expose four CIA men for engaging in "cultural espionage". This is Gallic paranoia. The men were reportedly trying to decipher some "intellectual property" that has long baffled American intelligence, presumably the French language.

Like Mr King, I have always believed that the sooner the world speaks English, the happier and more prosperous it will be. Promoting this language should be a priority of the United Nations. At the last count, 650 artificial world languages have been tried. Esperanto is the latest to collapse. None has worked because English has triumphed. Those who do not speak it are at a universal disadvantage against those who do. Those who deny this supremacy merely seek to keep the disadvantaged deprived. Mr King is right: "By encouraging new Americans to continue to use their native language ... the Government is helping to exclude these immigrants from mainstream society and any access to economic progress."

When I first travelled on the Continent an obligatory item of equipment was the phrasebook. Today most travellers — tourists, students, researchers, businessmen — simply do not bother. Most of the people with whom they have contact reckon to speak English, or are embarrassed if they do not. This is not Anglo-chauvinism or linguistic intolerance among English-speakers (though it is partly the latter). It is an economic and cultural fact. English will do in Africa, Russia, the Middle East, India, South-East Asia, Australasia. It will do because English is the language the world wants to learn, as the British Council knows well.

When the Warsaw Pact was wound up, it was wound up in English. When the G7 meets, it meets in



A missionary at work in Africa, circa 1800: more than a billion people are now thought to be English-speakers, so easy is the language to learn

English. English is the language of the United Nations antechamber, of international peacekeeping, of world banking, of diplomacy, of air traffic control. English is the language of academic research, space travel and scientific discovery. I am told that only 10 per cent of library requests for science and technology material worldwide are for non-English publications. English is the global computer language. It is the language of news gathering and world entertain-

over the billion mark. The *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language* puts it at a maximum of 1.4 billion speakers.

To deny English supremacy is not to stand up for little nations or for cultural diversity: it simply keeps non-English speakers poor. It also costs millions of pounds in translation. Linguistic chauvinism stops young people getting better jobs and stops their communities from integrating into wider politics. One of the poorest states in south India used to be Kerala. In the 1960s the state government introduced compulsory English into the schools. The state is now one of the richest, since Keralans can do business in an international tongue and

find jobs throughout the Middle East. This has not damaged Keralan culture.

English has not won the battle to be the world's language through a trial of imperial strength. As the American linguist Braj Kachru points out, English has achieved its hegemony through its inherent qualities, by "its propensity for acquiring new identities ... its range of varieties and above all its suitability as a flexible medium for literary and other types of creativity."

English has few inflections, endings or cases. Its grammar is based on simple word order. It has no clicks, tones or impersonatives. Its alphabet is phonetic and has 26 letters

(against 74 in Khmer and 85 in Cherokee). A student of Chinese or Japanese must learn 2,000 characters. English script can be scrawled and shorthand. As a spoken tongue, it may be an ugly duckling alongside Italian or Irish. Yet its pidgeons are easy to learn. Any language that can enable Shakespeare to talk to Al Haig is a triumph of communication.

English need not be protected by French Academies, Canadian constitutions or Flemish language rioters. It can survive in the backstreets of Harlem or the opium trails of Burma, on a Soyuz spacewalk or the throne at Buckingham Palace. The world must just take a deep breath and admit that it has a universal language at last. It would save itself much money and trouble. The one quid pro quo it should demand is that English lexicographers bow before the great Webster, and accept American orthography. English spelling is still awful. If we English can alter denle, interior and music, we can surely end the absurdity of thorough, centre and enough, if the world is to learn them by heart.

Then linguists can devote themselves to defending and preserving the world's "second" languages, not as rivals of English but as manifestations of ethnic and cultural character. English is a bastard tongue, displaying character only in dialect. To want to protect French from Anglicisation as an international language is a lost cause. To protect French as one of the aesthetic marvels of European civil-

sation is essential. To insist that Welsh sit alongside English on a Dyfed station or in a Cardiff parking ticket brings ridicule on a lovely language. But by all means encourage it in schools, promote its literature, even subsidise its television channel.

Language is the most vivid trace element of ethnicity in the world's history and geography. I am intrigued that there may once have been 2,000 distinct languages in South America, relics of the primeval grunts that mankind brought across the Aleutian bridge from Siberia in 10,000 BC. Few of them were recorded and only some 600 still survive, most of them still unstudied.

I am equally intrigued by the "isolates", languages whose vocabulary and grammar evolved from the earliest past unconsumed by any other tongue. Most have gone among a handful of survivors are the Japanese Ainu, the Mexican Tarasca and the precious, mysterious Basque, Europe's only aboriginal tongue.

These languages merit the protection we give to works of ancient architecture. They are the archaeology of civilisation: full of wisdom, legend and beauty, messages from the Earth's own time-travellers. All this will vanish if linguists expend their energies trying to compete with English. So Congress must vote the King language Bill. John Major might even take a leaf from the same book and demand English language supremacy in Europe at the 1996 summit. That is an act of federalist harmonisation that should warm the most sceptical heart.

Simon Jenkins

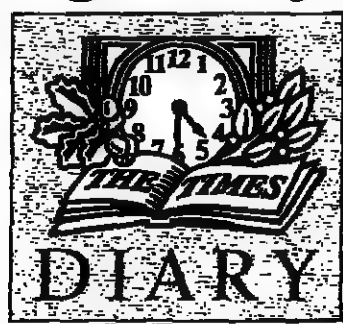
Escort agency

NOTHING is sacred to the Ministry of Defence's accountants. For I hear they want to force our top brass to replace their chauffeur-driven Rover 800s with Ford Escorts. The cost-cutting exercise to downgrade all cars allotted to the highest ranks is under "active examination".

With officers' perks under the microscope, keepers of the MoD's purse are eager to present a more humble image. By the time a batch of new staff cars is purchased by the end of this year, officers of two stars and above fully expect to lose the popular Rovers. The 114 Grade A officers, including chiefs of staff, may find Montegos awaiting them, but most officers are likely to be given Escorts.

Although the military high command is trying hard to accept the threat with equanimity, many officers visibly shudder. "It doesn't do much for the image of senior officers below the two-star level to have to turn up to important functions in an Escort," splutters my man in the MoD.

But military historian General Sir Anthony Farrar-Hockley, who



founded The Parachute Regiment, laughs: "In a period of about 15 years, we have gone down from those enormous Daimlers for most senior officers of four stars and above to Ford Escorts."

Soho story

SO WHAT is Kenneth Clarke doing on Wednesday after John Major puts his premiership on the line over Europe? Showing a nice sense of priorities, our jazz-loving Chancellor plans to slope off to Ronnie Scott's in Soho. Next week's special attraction is the 22-strong National

Youth Jazz Orchestra. "It will be Ken's first time seeing us," says the orchestra's young-at-heart leader, Bill Ashton. "But he's got an album which he said he enjoyed."

Clarke may be in good company. Two of his key opponents, the Euro-sceptic Bill Cash, a founder member of the Parliamentary Jazz Club, and Labour's jazz-loving deputy leader, John Prescott, have promised to join in the post-vote stomping.

Immediately before the Prime Minister's crucial vote, Clarke has another pressing engagement. He is due to expound to the Conservative Political Centre on the future of Conservatism.

Horticultured

THE AUTHOR Peter Ackroyd has persuaded the architect Wolf Alsop to turn the shed in the back garden of his north London home into a library. More used to constructing such large edifices as the visitor centre at Cardiff Bay, the station at Tottenham Hale and the ferry terminal at Hamburg, he was apparently attracted by the challenge of the project.

The 400 sq ft building, which will house several thousand books, will feature a glass front with a long

desk stretching from the library through the window panes out into the garden itself. "The idea is to have a fusion between the study and the garden," says one of Alsop's minions. "Will thought it was an unusual project."

"I was delighted when he decided to take it on. Normally he only does huge projects," crows Ackroyd.

● James Herriot, the pseudonym of the author Alf Wight who died on Thursday, did not write only about animals. A short story called *La Vie en Rose*, which he sent to the magazine *Raconteur* last month,



tells instead of a love affair between a married man and a beautiful woman.

From the blue

STUDENTS at Richmond Drama School in west London gave a highly charged ensemble performance this week. In the midst of an exercise exploring theatrical interpretations of the four elements, the elements themselves put on a spectacular *son et lumière* of their own.

Windows flew open, thunder crashed and a bolt of lightning struck the college, fusing the electric and burning out the new telephone system. "It was terrifying," says one. "There was a sudden flash of white light and we were all leaping about like mad. Quite an electric performance."

● A conspiracy of Chief Whips gathered in the office of the present incumbent, Richard Ryder, this week to celebrate 45 years in the Commons of their esteemed colleague, Sir Edward Heath. As Jopling, Pym, Atkin, Renton et al entered the dreaded sanctuary, one Tory MP shuddered: "Just think of the secrets stored in those heads."



Hot Currie: which legs belong to the author and which to the model?

Pin-up

EVER THE professional, Edwina Currie is to put in some serious leg-work to promote the paperback edition of her raunchy novel *A Parliamentary Affair*. The shapely legs of a model will adorn the front cover as they did the hardback, but the well-toned pins of the Tory MP herself will be shown off in the new publicity drive.

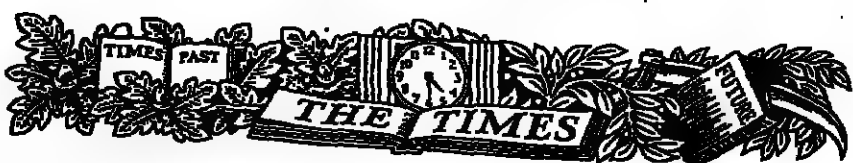
She plans to adopt the provocative pose used on the book cover while atop a double-decker bus in



Trafalgar Square next month on the way to Olympia's London International Book Fair. However her black stockings will not be adorned by the House of Commons portulias. Use of the emblem led to Currie having her knuckles rapped by Madame Speaker when it featured on the stockings on the original dustjacket.

"We are hoping she will show a bit of leg, raise her skirt a little," says her publicist. "She's not shameless you know, just very professional."

P.H.S



SALAMAT'S SAFETY

A British refuge from persecution in Pakistan

To the relief of all who cherish the principles of humanity and tolerance, the High Court in Lahore has acquitted Salamat Masih, a 14-year-old Christian, of the charge of blasphemy against Islam. Acquitted, also, was Rehmat Masih, his uncle. Had the court not upheld their appeal against the decision of a judge earlier this month, both would have been sentenced to death.

The case has attracted particular attention in the West — and nowhere more so than in Britain — because of the extreme youth of Salamat, the risible nature of the evidence for the prosecution, and the iniquity of the laws under which the charges were brought. Most disconcerting of all was the hysteria which the case provoked in the more extreme sections of Pakistani society.

A clash of civilisations has occurred in Pakistan. Islamic extremists are in a minority in the country — they polled less than 4 per cent of the vote between them in the last elections — and were unable to prevent a brave defence of the Masihis by lawyers, churchmen and ordinary citizens. Yet those who wished to avenge the "insult" by the two Christians to the Prophet Muhammad commanded a wide and respectful audience — much more so than is healthy for the country and its religious minorities. Pakistan's Christians and Hindus, as well as those who belong to Islamic traditions which the mullahs regard as "heretical", have never been in greater danger. It is to the credit of the two judges who acquitted Salamat and Rehmat that the High Court was able to withstand the intimidation to which it was subjected.

At the root of the problem is the country's blasphemy law, under which a person can be sentenced to death for "insults by imputation or innuendo against Islam" and for

"derogatory remarks in respect of the Holy Prophet". All the prosecution need furnish as evidence is the testimony of a single Muslim man. As the valiant Hina Jilani, defence lawyer for Salamat and Rehmat, stated after the acquittal of her clients, "the Government and the legislature must take this case as a warning of what can happen as long as the blasphemy law stays on the statute book". There are more than 300 cases of blasphemy pending in various courts across Pakistan. While the majority of the accused are members of "heretical" Islamic sects, some 30 cases involve Christians.

As Ms Jilani also made explicit after their acquittal, there can be no question of Salamat and Rehmat now returning to their village of Ratta Dhotran. All the Christian families of this village have had to flee; and as our South Asia Correspondent wrote yesterday, some Pakistani mullahs have already exhorted Muslims to "bring glory to Islam" by killing Salamat and Rehmat. The lawyer for the prosecution, Rashid Murtaza Qureshi, described the High Court as a "kangaroo court", and accused both Salamat and Rehmat of "working hand-in-glove with Salmaan Rushdie".

It should be said that, being unlettered, neither Salamat nor Rehmat could have read *The Satanic Verses*. Both Christians are, however — like the author to whom they have infamously been linked — in peril of being murdered by fanatics. The Pakistani authorities now have the task of ensuring their safety, as well as that of their relatives: yet such is the hate with which these Christians are regarded that the authorities may not prove equal to the task. Britain should offer immediate asylum to Salamat and Rehmat, as well as to their families. Let them find refuge in our gentler traditions.

BIRTH OF A NATION

Why the Hundred Years War should be commemorated

The Battle of Agincourt of October 25, 1415 occupies a mythic place in the nation's memory. Henry V's great victory over the French has been an inspiration to Englishmen since the day it was won. "Gentlemen in England now a-bed, Shall think themselves accursed they were not here," says Shakespeare's King. More recently, Olivier and Branagh have brought the battle to life on screen. Tomorrow, the Battlefields Trust is holding a debate in London in which the tactics of the English archers will be the subject of fierce debate.

As much as any other great battle, Agincourt has become a fixture in our national culture. Yet the conflict of which it was a part, the Hundred Years War, excites comparatively little interest. Most Britons know Henry's great triumph. Fewer are familiar with the Battle of Crécy in 1346 at which Philip VI of France was defeated by Edward III, or the great victory won by Edward the Black Prince at Poitiers ten years later. The war's great chroniclers, such as Froissart, are little known in this country. This gap in our collective knowledge would be less important were the Hundred Years War not such a vital chapter in the formation of our national identity. In origin, the battles fought between England and France from 1337 and 1453 reflected traditional rivalries in Gascony and Flanders. But the war gradually became a more elemental struggle between two emerging nations, a crucible in which many of the key features of Englishness were forged.

The administration of the realm, in particular, matured dramatically in the course of the conflict. The evolution of Parliament as a tax-raising representative institution was accelerated by the demands and opportunities of war. The monarchy, too, strengthened its position as the

institutional symbol of national cohesion in time of adversity, not least by its association with pageantry and ritual celebrating military success. The grand celebrations of October 1416 to celebrate the first anniversary of Agincourt typified this new dramatisation of the national spirit.

The champions of embryonic Englishness spoke of the nation as the new Israel. In his sermons of the 1370s, Bishop Brinton of Rochester suggested to his flock that God was, in fact, English. Special prayers for the King's armies became common. The French were caricatured in nationalist propaganda as naturally deceitful and spineless. A demonic tone entered the patriotic tracts of even the most genteel authors. Laurence Minot, the Yorkshire verse-writer, claimed that Edward III had attacked the French King in 1340 "to shac him by the berd". Out of long antagonism, a language of national pride began to emerge.

In the debate about European integration, it has become fashionable to suggest that British identity is a very recent construct and — by implication — less sacrosanct than Euro-sceptics would claim. Many federalists have invoked Linda Colley's controversial book, *Britons*, which ascribes the birth of modern Britain in the 18th century to shared Protestant opposition to France, to Catholicism and to other ethnic groups. Professor Colley's account of the circumstances in which Britishness emerged has much to recommend it. Yet it should not be forgotten that a much older sense of Englishness underpinned the new identity of the 17th Union. That identity sprang in large part from a century-long war with our nearest European neighbour. To recall the glory of Agincourt is to realise how long these islands have sought to be distinctive and how deep the roots of nationhood really are.

KING OF THE DAFFODILS

Every little bulb carries a germ of horticultural history

Here come the brave daffodils again, earlier each year because of their increasingly precocious varieties. They now show months before the first spring tourist dars. Next Wednesday is St David's day, and there are few parts of the United Kingdom in which the narcissi are not blowing their trumpets. Even people who never stir from the inner city rejoice at the return of the native flower of spring to parks, window-boxes and vases.

But Martin Harwood is lord of the Lenten lilies, for he has 100,000 of them growing in his garden. As we report in today's Weekend section, Mr Harwood is the official custodian of the National Collection of Narcissi, and so the patron of daffodil-lovers. He grows 2,800 cultivated varieties of narcissi, jonquils and other daffodils, and hundreds of wild species in his suburban garden. This is the largest collection of one kind of plant in the country. But other keepers of Britain's floral heritage collect other species. They exhibit such characteristics as the passion for collecting complete sets, the creative instinct, and a competitive urge to produce a better display than the folk next door.

Gardeners have usually shown some of these characteristics in an effort to improve their plot. But as garden history becomes a systematic study, historians have realised that standardisation by garden centres and industrial horticulture is causing old varieties of plants to become extinct. Gardeners buy their seeds, bulbs and corms in packets instead of growing them themselves and exchanging them with fellow-

gardeners. So unfashionable and unprofitable varieties are vanishing before the advance of the mass-produced herbaceous borders. Between 500 and 1,000 varieties of garden plant are lost each year.

Accordingly in 1978 the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens was formed to preserve these species threatened by unnatural selection. There are now more than 600 national collections in Britain, from the 57 cultivars of beech tree in the charge of the Prince of Wales at Highgrove, to 1,001 pots in the backyard of Ray Stevenson, a teacher in Northumberland. Mr Stevenson keeps the National Collection of Sedum (succulent little stonecrops).

The botanical definition of the NCCPG is "the networked living germplasm repository". Such a definition misses the poetry as well as the science of the daffodil. *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*. Mr Harwood and his fellow keepers of the national collections are preservers of the horticultural past and guarantors of its future. Because of their green fingers and aching backs, there are plants which are extinct today in their natural habitat but still survive in British gardens. By their labour of love, the keepers of the national collections are horticultural historians. Even frail flowers preserve the past as well as making promises for the future. But unlike artefacts, they display the immortality of eternal renewal as well as brighter dress than Madonna in all her glory. Those daffodils are living heritage as well as the punctual announcers of spring.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Spies and their influence in a cloak-and-dagger world

From Lord Mayhew

Sir, I believe I know quite as much as, if not more than, either Colonel Lyubimov (letter, February 23) or Mr Gordievsky about "KGB agents of influence".

I tangled with them, often on personal terms, throughout my political life — in the pre-war student socialist movement, in the Labour Party and the unions, in the Foreign Office under Ernest Bevin (running, among other things, anti-communist propaganda) and as a defence spokesman, persecuted by unilateralists, in both the Labour and Liberal parties.

What is a "KGB agent of influence"? Not, of course, a spy; he, or she, would be a "KGB agent". I knew some of them: they were in a different class.

Broadly, an "agent of influence" was a person of genuine political conviction who accepted political guidance from the KGB (often unaware that he was dealing with the KGB). Nothing illegal, or even immoral, about that: just breathtakingly bad judgement.

Where Colonel Lyubimov goes wrong is in suggesting that because these people were not agents in the usual sense, and because their status was inflated in KGB reports to Moscow, they were unimportant. This is far from the truth. These people had a profound and baleful influence in British left-wing politics and on British-Soviet relations.

Already Marxists, or near-Marxists, their views were easily reinforced by their tactical and well-informed Soviet friends. (At the Foreign Office after the war I would read intercepts of their telephone conversations; though I soon gave this up, through boredom and distaste.)

They would readily accept briefing on "peace" and "coexistence", and this would in due course be reflected in resolutions at union branches and local Labour parties, in MP's' postbags (including my own), in the *Daily Worker*, *Tribune*, the *New Statesman* and *The Guardian*, and in the literature of CND and numerous "front" organisations.

This added up to a useful Soviet weapon against Nato, German rearmament, Polaris, cruise and similar critical issues. At certain moments, more "agents of influence" might well have swung the issue the wrong way.

Colonel Lyubimov underestimates the influence of his predecessors in the KGB.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER MAYHEW,
House of Lords,
February 23.

From Mr Brian Crozier

Sir, It is hardly possible to be interested in Colonel Mikhail Lyubimov's letter but it should be borne in

mind that Oleg Gordievsky is not exactly popular among his former colleagues in Moscow, where indeed he is still under sentence of death.

The Western term, "agent of influence", sounds more accusatory than the euphemistic KGB equivalent, "confidential contact", which indeed corresponds more closely to what the British secret services call "unconscious" and the American call "unwitting" agents.

I have never believed Michael Foot to be, even "unconsciously", a KGB agent, and he was frequently and outspokenly critical of Soviet actions. It is surely not unfair, however, to point out that the Labour Party, under Michael Foot's leadership, came in, creating under the influence of the Soviet-line British Communist Party (CPGB), both in the constituencies and through the trade unions.

The case of Harry Hopkins is quite different. The American specialist on communist affairs, Herbert Rosen, was informed by a high-ranking KGB contact in Moscow that Hopkins was not merely a "confidential contact" of the NKVD (a predecessor of the KGB) but a paid and therefore fully conscious agent of influence. He was thus largely responsible for President Roosevelt's and Winston Churchill's explicit trust in Stalin. Further details appear in my autobiography, *Free Agent*, which *The Times* kindly serialised in 1993.

Yours faithfully,
BRIAN CROZIER,
Flat AA, 1 Carlisle Place,
Westminster, SW1,
February 23.

From Mr Oleg Gordievsky

Sir, Colonel Lyubimov, a great admirer of Leon Trotsky and Kim Philby, has a love-hate attitude towards Britain. Although he loves the country tenderly, he devoted much of his life to breaking down its society, recruiting British people for the KGB and organising black propaganda. One of his most important personal achievements was a PhD thesis entitled "The English national character and how it may be used to recruit Englishmen into the KGB". A large part of it was dictated by his kind friend Kim Philby.

While working in London in the 1960s, Lyubimov cultivated British politicians and in certain cases personally distributed money. He was expelled from the country for attempting to recruit an important government official.

I once asked him why it was that during his time in London he used such ridiculous methods as, for example, forcing his contacts among the ranks of public figures to run to secret meetings, using dead-letter boxes and foisting cash on them. He replied that it was necessary in order to increase

their discipline in their relations with the KGB and was also useful for the forthcoming "crisis situation" (the war between East and West).

Lyubimov also knows perfectly well that the KGB used to infiltrate political parties, not with a view to getting its hands on the party's secrets, but with the aim of having its agents in the government when that party came to power.

But why is Lyubimov now trying to tone down both his and the KGB's role in Britain? Because the KGB, which hates embarrassing publicity, wants it and Lyubimov is subservient to its will. In 1985 the KGB wrongly accused him of helping me escape from the USSR to the West and tried to punish him. Lyubimov was frightened to death. Since then he has been obliged to consult with the KGB before publishing anything in the British press.

In Britain some hardcore agents are serving prison sentences. Other friends of the KGB limited their relations with it to enjoying lavish lunches, crates of vodka and occasional cash pay-outs in return for political gossip and pro-Soviet conference speeches.

Yours etc,
OLEG GORDIEVSKY,
c/o 79 St Martin's Lane, WC2.

From Mr George Walden, MP for Buckingham (Conservative)

Sir, Colonel Lyubimov's letter from Moscow gets close to the heart of our latest little spy drama. The episode is nicely revealing of the element of illusion in our national temperaments. Just as we bolster our post-imperial self-importance by dramatising anything remotely to do with intelligence, so, in factually overplaying the significance of their British contacts to please their bosses, the KGB were illustrating the trait of fantasy and dissimulation in the Russian character.

It is all there in the national literature. In *The Government Inspector* by Gogol, the small-time wastrel Khlestakov assuages provincial ladies by his claims of intimacy with the great: "I hob-nob quite a bit with Pushkin, ya know. So how's it going, Pushkin old boy? I say to him, 'So-so' he says to me, 'not so bad'. What a card that man is... In the States, Khlestakov would have been in the KGB, and made a top secret telegram of that. *Our Man in Havana* was up to similar tricks.

More to the point would be a sober reappraisal by Mr Foot and the others of their record of indulgence towards Stalinist Russia.

Yours faithfully,
G. G. H. WALDEN,
House of Commons,
February 23.

unfriendly reaction at all. Having seen the faces of many of my compatriots I would say that, on the contrary, Dresdeners observed the presence of my allied comrades with deep sympathy.

Many Germans told me that they considered it as a highly important and touching gesture when the three Chiefs of Defence Staff laid wreaths at the Heidefriedhof. This was a commemoration of the victims: it was also a signal of hope for the future because the adversaries of 50 years ago have long become friends.

Finally, the suggestion that it was on this occasion that I informed General Shalikashvili that Bonn would supply military hospital staff and Tornados in the event of a UN withdrawal from Bosnia is nonsense. That information (which is subject to parliamentary approval) was given to Nato last December.

Yours sincerely,
KLAUS NAUMANN,
Bundesministerium der Verteidigung,
3300 Bonn,
February 21.

From Mr M. R. Jackson

Sir, Of the three "traditional" hymns you report (February 20) to be heading the BBC's top ten hymns contest — *Dear Lord and Father of Mankind*, *Jerusalem* and *Abide with Me* — only the third was in *Hymns Ancient & Modern* fifty years ago. *The English Hymnal* of that time published all three, but again only *Abide with Me* was set to its now popular tune.

Songs of Praise was unique in publishing *Dear Lord and Father of Mankind* and *Jerusalem* with the tunes which would maintain popularity half a century later. Was this cultural perception, or was it the widespread use of *Songs of Praise* in schools that shaped current opinion on favourite hymns? If the latter, will *Jerusalem* and *Abide with Me* be around in 2045?

Yours sincerely,
M. R. JACKSON,
12 Peacock Lane,
Hest Bank, Lancaster,
February 20.

From Mr David Renfrew

Sir, It is not the middle classes who have deserted the Tories (headline, later editions, February 24) but rather the Tories who have deserted the middle classes.

Yours etc,
DAVID RENFREW,
The Chantry,
Erdington, Warwickshire,
February 24.

Hymns ancient, modern and to be

From the Chief Executive of the Royal College of Organists

Sir, The report by your Religion Correspondent on February 20 that the General Synod of the Church of England may be invited to consider setting up a Council for Worship, apparently comparable with the functions of the Council for the Care of Churches, will be read with mixed enthusiasm by many of those who are concerned about the vitality of the music-making in our cathedrals and parish churches.

I do not wish to impute an unduly preservationist cast of mind to those who work hard looking after thousands of buildings and their furnishings, especially when so much of their work is inevitably concerned with very ancient structures. However, the approach to matters affecting contemporary worship must surely be shaped by a predominantly creative style.

Your Religion Correspondent also comes close to implying that traditional means old (if not actually fuddy-duddy) and that new means populist. That may or may not be so. But what is undoubtedly needed is a very much greater effort to bring in new music and literary texts of high quality.

There is too little in the repertoires of most cathedral choirs to match the best that can be heard of today's composers in the concert hall and occasionally the opera house. There is even less of such music that is appropriate for the resources of average parish church choirs and congregations.

If the General Synod needs a new council (and any sign that the Church as a body cares about this issue would be welcome), then I very much hope that it will set up one that will work dynamically with composers, organists and directors of music to change the current situation.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL NICHOLAS,
Chief Executive,
The Royal College of Organists,
7 St Andrew Street, Holborn, EC4,
February 20.

From Mr Ben Whitley

Sir, I don't know what churches your Religion Correspondent, Ruth Gledhill, has visited when she writes today of organists "unable to master gospel rhythms" and "frustrated congregations reduced to silence".

In my experience it is those churches which have not adapted to modern styles of singing which are likely to be largely silent — because there is hardly anyone there to do the singing!

Can the traditionalists not grasp that all music was contemporary when it was first written? Singing hymns and songs at all was once seen as a modern innovation. It is a simple case of adapt or die. God is not glorified by the praise uttered by empty buildings.

Yours sincerely,
BEN WHITLEY,
47 Manor Farm Crescent, Stafford,
February 20.

From Mr Howard Evans

Sir, Of course, what Ruth Gledhill doesn't mention is that the evangelical and charismatic churches which use the "meaningless, evangelical choruses" are the only churches in England and Wales that are growing. Could it be that these choruses are seen to be much more meaningful and relevant to the approach of the 21st century than singing hymns often penned in the 18th century, using the kind of English which no one uses any more?

Yours faithfully,
HOWARD EVANS,
Woodvale, Tuckers Villas,
Woodbine Road, Blackwood, Gwent,
February 20.

From Mr M. R. Jackson

Sir, Of the three "traditional" hymns you report (February 20) to be heading the BBC's top ten hymns contest — *Dear Lord and Father of Mankind*, *Jerusalem* and *Abide with Me* — only the third was in *Hymns Ancient & Modern* fifty years ago. *The English Hymnal* of that time published all three, but again only *Abide with Me* was set to its now popular tune.

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Yours etc,
DAVID RENFREW,
The Chantry,
Erdington, Warwickshire,
February 24.

Oxbridge club

From the Reverend David Galilee

Sir, It is surely a political commonplace that the present healthy state of the Labour Party is in no small part due to the stature of a Denis Healey, who stayed to fight his corner, rather than to a Roy Jenkins, who deserted it.

The mass resignation of the "great and the good" from the Oxford and Cambridge Club (report and letter, February 23) is sad and has a whiff of sectarian spite and gesture politics. Having a wife who is a Cambridge graduate, who cannot be a full member of the club nor use its wonderful library, has always struck me as a nonsense.

Similarly, the exclusion of women from the president always seemed to me a nonsense, but patience and rational argument in the end prevailed. Presumably those of your distinguished signatories who shared my premises on that issue also shared my conclusion and did not resign their membership of the Church of England.

For the sake of argument, say the present Oxford and Cambridge Club collapsed and had to shut down, what of the livelihoods of its excellent and loyal staff who have served it so well over many years? There is a moral case for staying in the club and pursuing necessary reforms.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID GALILEE,
St Mildred's Vicarage,
Sefton Road, Croydon, Surrey,
February 23.

Driven to distraction

From Mr Trevor Williams

Sir, Mr Anthony G. Phillips (letter, February 20), is quite right in decrying what may be described as linguistic inflation, and the impetus towards redundancy seems to increase. Thus, we demand a haven; and not just a haven — a safe haven.

Yours,

TREVOR WILLIAMS,
18 Churchways Avenue,
Horfield, Bristol, Avon,
February 21.

From Mr Philip D. Badrock

Sir, With due respect to Mr Phillips, my favourite barmaid at my local pub knows instantly what I have in mind when I order "two halves".

Yours faithfully,
PHILIP D. BADROCK,
Outwood, South Hill,
Chislehurst, Kent,
February 20.

Dresden ceremony

From General Klaus Naumann, Chief of Staff of the Bundeswehr

Sir, As a reader of *The Times* for many years I was unhappy to read your report (February 14) on the recent ceremony in Dresden commemorating the 50th anniversary of the city's destruction.

It is untrue to state that "it has been a long time since Dresden saw a British military uniform". Field Marshal Sir Peter Inge had already visited Dresden on September 22-23, 1994, together with members of the Nato military committee; both he and the chairman of the committee, Field Marshal Sir Richard Vincent, wore British uniform when they visited the Semper Opera and while they walked for hours in the city, talking to people who showed no signs whatever of not liking uniforms.

The same is true for February 13. The three of us — Sir Peter Inge, General Shalikashvili and I — deliberately walked from one place to another in the centre of Dresden wearing our uniform and met no

Role of honour

From Mr Neil Addison

Sir, News that councillors in Nottingham had failed to agree on the appointment of a new sheriff (report, February 23) is hardly surprising. This ancient office has for too long been seen as an honour without a role. Sheriffs played an important role in English legal history. Local magistrates should choose them and either senior local magistrates or local circuit judges should be appointed.

Yours sincerely,
NEIL ADDISON,
5 Garsdale Road,
Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear,
February 23.

Seen and noted

From Mr D. W. Sykes, FRCOG

Sir, As a first-year medical student, I looked at my notes ("Whose notes are they anyway?"). Body and Mind, February 14) when my family GP left the room to get a dressing for a rugby injury. The previous entry read: "Says he wants to be a doctor — silly munt!"

Yours faithfully,
D. W. SYKES,
Eastcliff House,
Budleigh Salterton, Devon.

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046.

Weekend Money letters, page 35

DR LI ZHISUI

ROBERT ROBSON

CANON ANDREW HUNT

PERSONAL COLUMN

me was blighted by illness and increasing infirmity. In 1985 he was diagnosed as having lymphoma. He fought the disease with a determination that surprised even his friends. In September of last year he inquired of his consultant whether it would be worth his while to invest in a new raincoat. His question was an Anglicised version of the celebrated phrase of Dorothy Parker: "Tell it to me, I'm a consultant." Sadly, the advice he was given proved mistaken.

He is survived by a sister and a brother.

deserted areas of Saskatchewan. Hunt and his friend lived very rough, sometimes travelling on horseback in deep snow. These experiences were enough to confirm his vocation.

After his period of training at Wescott House, he was ordained at the beginning of the Second World War and served as a curate at Queensbury in north London during the Blitz. Later in the war he met and married his wife Pat, daughter of a clergyman, and became youth chaplain to the Bishop of Leicester.

Salisbury (Harare), he discovered that one of the side-effects of Ian Smith's UDI was to cripple church finances and thus, among other things, to impoverish an expatriate priest and his family.

The uncertainties of the time led Hunt to apply for a teaching appointment at a government secondary school. He secured a post quickly and continued, at first, with his incumbency. But he at once

Music was introduced, meanwhile the need for balancing the Shona and Mazembe elements in the school were respected. When Hunt retired in 1975, the number of pupils had risen to 320.

On retirement to Mutara, Hunt went on teaching full time in other African schools. He finally left Zimbabwe first for St Albans and then for Oxford in 1985, having been made a canon by the Bishop of Mutara.

He is survived by his wife, three sons and a daughter.

**ARMY SEIZES POWER
IN GHANA**

LAGOS, NIGERIA, FEB. 24

The Ghana Army seized power in Accra today and declared that "the myth surrounding Kwame Nkrumah has been broken". While the coup was being launched, the 50-year-old Ghanaian president was flying from Rampong to Polokwane. Reports from Accra, received through diplomatic channels, said troops and police had surrounded the airport, the radio station and key buildings in the town. Sporadic shooting was heard early this morning around Flagstaff House, Dr. Nkrumah's triple-walled, heavily guarded residence. At 10 a.m. Radio Ghana broadcast an ultimatum giving the "military forces" inside the residence until 11:30 a.m. to surrender. Twenty tanks manned by the rebels were ranged outside the building. Several vehicles were burnt. Loyalist Army and security troops were reported to be blockaded inside Flagstaff House. Several thousand jubilant Ghanaians surged outside Usher Fort prison after the radio announced that the political prisoners would be released "in due course". Accra itself was calm, although few shops remained open. Shots were reported heard near the residence of Mr. Kofi Baako, the Minister for Defence,

ON THIS DAY
February 25 1966

The colonies of Gold Coast and Togoland combined to become the independent state of Ghana in 1960. Dr. Nkrumah was the country's first President. He was criticised for "ruling the country as if it were his own personal property".

and there was said to have been a grenade attack on the home of Lieutenant-Colonel David C. Zanieriga, commander of Dr. Nkrumah's Russian-equipped presidential guard. Leading the coup was Colonel E. K. Kotoka, aged 40, commander of the 2nd Brigade, which had recently been ordered from its base in Kumasi for manoeuvres around Accra. Listeners in Radio Ghana heard Colonel Kotoka declare in a firm voice: "Fellow citizens, I have come to inform you that the military, with the co-operation of the police, have taken over the

Government." He went on to declare the dismissal of Dr. Nkrumah and his Ministers, the suspension of the Constitution and Parliament, and the abolition of the Convention People's Party—the sole political movement under Dr. Nkrumah's dictatorial regime. Subsequent broadcasts proclaimed the setting up of a "liberation committee" to run the Government. A broadcast said all leading officials of the C.C.P. had been rounded up. The radio appealed to Ghanaians to help the police in the arrest of all party chairmen and local secretaries. Fifty-six political detainees have been released by the newly formed Ghanaian National Liberation Committee, Radio Accra said tonight. An army broadcast said concentration of power in the hands of one man had led to political abuses. It strongly criticised what it called capricious handling of the country's economic affairs by Dr. Nkrumah which, it said, had brought Ghana to the point of economic collapse.—*Reuter*.

PEKING, Feb. 24.—Dr. Nkrumah looked tense and grim when he attended a state banquet here tonight, but spoke as if nothing had happened. His Chinese hosts did not mention today's coup either—but the atmosphere at the banquet was strained and quiet.

1



MELVYN MARCKUS 24

Our City Editor reviews the utility farce



PROFILE 25

Partners in Power at Arthur D Little



SPORT 38-44

Champion boxer who refuses to give up the fight

WEEKEND SPORTING FIXTURES
Page 41

THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 25 1995



Power overload: Paul Williams, senior retail stockbroker of the National Westminster Bank, loads a forklift truck in London with sacksful of applications that the bank has received for the remaining shares in PowerGen and National Power ahead of Wednesday's deadline

ICI demands inquiry into power suppliers

By Philip Bassett and Ross Tieman

CRITICISM of the privatisation of the electricity industry reached a new pitch yesterday when ICI attacked it as "flawed" and said it would seek a monopolies investigation to restructure electricity supply.

Michael Heseltine, President of the Board of Trade, is also being pressed to launch an inquiry into the regional electricity supply companies. The chairman of the cross-party Trade and Industry select committee, the Labour MP Richard Caborn, has written to him asking for a reference under Section 11.2 of the Electricity Act, which appears to allow for an inquiry if customers complain about pricing.

The special dividend of £530 million that Northern Electric

has offered its shareholders in an effort to escape a £1.26 billion bid from Trafalgar House shows that the new price control formula proposed by Stephen Littlechild, the electricity regulator, is "far too lenient," Mr Caborn says. Critics of the electricity regime are focusing upon the nature and timing of consultations held by Professor Littlechild in connection with the pricing review. Publication of Northern Electric's defence against the Trafalgar bid has drawn new attention to the extraordinary profitability of the RECs under the first five-year price control, put in place by the Government.

It has also highlighted the greater than expected value of the National Grid company, and provoked concerns about

the failure of Professor Littlechild's review to have a bigger impact on the RECs' profitability.

The new price caps on the 12 regional supply companies cannot be formalised until public consultations by the regulator have been completed on April 1.

The trade and industry select committee is believed to be considering holding an inquiry into the state of Britain's privatised electricity industry. The inquiry would almost certainly look at both generation and supply, and review the planned opening of the domestic market to competition in April 1998. Professor Littlechild has already indicated that he plans to introduce trial competition within areas served by each of the RECs

well ahead of the 1998 deadline.

ICI's attack on electricity privatisation, charging that it is costing consumers £1.5 billion a year unnecessarily, marks a new high point in long-running efforts by large electricity users to obtain lower power prices for big consumers.

Bryan Bulloch, ICI Chlor-Chemicals power services manager, said it was now "vital" to get the electricity industry back to where customers could get a fair, competitive deal on prices in the way that they could in any normal market.

Speaking to an energy seminar in the City, Mr Bulloch said that the "flawed" privatisation of the industry was costing consumers £1.5 billion

annually, based on a close estimate of the costs attributable to unnecessary new generation plant, uncompetitive pool prices and "over-generous" regulation of the regional electricity companies.

He said: "Something is out of kilter when a generator like National Power can lose 30 per cent of its market share since privatisation and yet still increase its profit by 60 per cent."

He warned that if there was no "satisfactory solution" to the large users' claims on power prices, ICI "would have no alternative" but to press the Office of Fair Trading to initiate a Monopolies and Mergers Commission investigation.

Melvyn Marckus, page 24

Pound hit by political worries

By Janet Bush
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

STERLING slumped yesterday along with government bond and share prices as political worries about next Wednesday's key parliamentary debate on the Government's European policy rattled investors.

The pound's index against a basket of currencies slipped to 87.1 against 87.4 on Thursday as sterling lost more than one pence and over one cent against the mark and the dollar. Gilts lost the gains built up over the previous two days and the FT-SE index, which had strengthened along with Wall Street in midweek, also closed lower.

The markets turned negative after it was announced that the Prime Minister would himself defend the Government's policies on Wednesday, a move that shifted the status of the debate closer to a vote of confidence.

The effect of political worries was compounded by a continuing flood of investment money into the mark and a stronger dollar on the back of strong US durable goods orders figures.

The pound's troubles came despite encouraging trade figures, suggesting that Britain's export-led recovery remains on track. The Central Statistical Office reported that Britain's deficit with countries outside the European Union plunged to £303 million in January from what now appears to have been a highly erratic £913 million in December.

Excluding oil and erratic items, such as ships and precious stones, the non-EU trade deficit shrank to £138 million from £762 million, the smallest monthly shortfall since January, 1988.

The overwhelming popularity of the mark sent the lira and the peseta to record lows yesterday and the French franc fell to its lowest level for 16 months against the German currency.

WEEKEND MONEY



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Anne Ashworth

MORTGAGES

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Negative equity. The conspiracy of silence



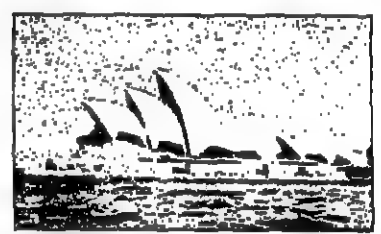
HOLIDAY MONEY



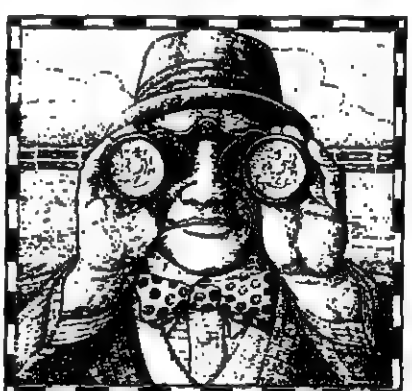
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Australian Olympic hopes



PEPS
20-page guide to help you pick the right plan



BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET PRICES		
FT-SE 100	3897.2	(-11.8)
Yield	4.35%	
FT-SE All share	1500.15	(-3.58)
Nikkei	17472.94	(-957.08)
Dow Jones	3899.20	(-4.03)
S&P Composite	498.31	(-0.67)

US DOLLAR		
Federal Funds	5 1/8%	(5 1/8%)
Long Bond	100 1/8%	(100 1/8%)
Yield	7.56%	(7.56%)

STERLING		
3-month Interbank	6 1/4%	(6 1/4%)
Life long gilt	10 1/4%	(10 1/4%)
Future (Mar)	10 1/4%	(10 1/4%)

NEW YORK		
\$	1.5870	(1.5850)
London	1.5808	(1.5825)
DM	2.3281	(2.3418)
FF	6.1790	(6.1890)
Sfr	1.3803	(1.3830)
Sfr	154.35	(154.13)
Yen	87.1	(87.4)

US DOLLAR		
London	1.4685	(1.4687)
DM	5.1395	(5.1315)
FF	1.2478	(1.2492)
Yen	97.08	(96.77)
Sfr	61.8	(61.4)

NORTHEAST OIL		
Brent 15-day (May)	\$18.80	(\$18.75)
Gold		
London close	\$375.85	(\$379.18)
Close		

US suits

Two of Britain's leading engineering groups are sued in US. Page 24

Insurer plans bonanza payout

By Sarah Bagnall, Insurance Correspondent

UNITED Friendly Group, the small UK insurer, sent shares in the insurance sector sharply higher yesterday when it announced that it would pay shareholders an annual bonanza, estimated at about £18 million after tax.

The payments — potentially worth more than the group's total 1993 dividend of £13 million — represent the investment income on £275 million of life-fund reserves that the company has identified as surplus.

After two years of number-crunching and discussions, the Department of Trade and Industry has given the insurer the go-ahead to distribute this income to shareholders.

George Mack, finance director and deputy chief executive, said: "This significantly en-

hances our dividend-paying capacity." The announcement lifted United Friendly's B shares 92p to 605p and triggered sharp rises elsewhere in the sector. Britannic Assurance rose 7 1/2p to 505p and Refuge Group 39p to 322p.

The City now expects these companies, which also boast rich reserves, to follow United Friendly's lead. Stephen Dias, an analyst at Goldman Sachs, said: "If they don't, they are exposing themselves to the threat of a takeover."

The value of the surpluses insurance companies often have locked away in their life funds was revealed in 1989 when Pearl highlighted it in its attempt to fend off a bid from AMP.

Tempus, page 26

Northern battle too close to call

By Eric Reguly

THE battle for Northern Electric seems to be turning into a cliff-hanger because institutional investors, who own more than 80 per cent of the company, say "Trafalgar House's final offer is not obviously better value than Northern's defence package."

Several institutions said they would probably not decide which side to back until the very last minute. "Trafalgar's bid was pitched at a level that could justify holding on to Northern shares," said one investment manager.

On Thursday, Trafalgar raised its cash offer to £11 a share from £10.48. Northern was relieved: it had expected £11.50 to £12 a share.

Both sides will visit institutions next week in a last-ditch effort to win them over. The

Prudential, the largest investor, with a 9 per cent stake, is the key target. Other big investors include Sun Life with 2.5 per cent; BZW Investment Management (2.5 per cent) and M&G (2 per cent).

Another investment manager said: "I think it will be touch and go because the package from Northern is not that bad compared to Trafalgar's offer. I genuinely don't know which way I'll go."

The package being offered by Northern is worth an estimated £5.07 per share, including a £2.50 per share special dividend. Accepting Trafalgar's £11 implies, therefore, that Trafalgar's underlying business, or "the rump," is worth about £6.

Northern shares closed at 1058p, up 5p.

Ailing Pentos holds rescue talks



McGrath: confident

PENTOS, the troubled owner of the Dilons and Ryans chains, is in talks with venture capitalists in a last-ditch bid to rescue the company from possible receivership.

A number of venture capital companies have held talks with Barclays and Midland. Pentos's bankers, over the possibility of injecting new equity into the business. Industry sources believe that Electra, Schroder Ventures and Warburg Pincus are involved in the talks.

Pentos's existing £50 million bank facilities are due to

expire on Tuesday. Although Bill McGrath, chief executive, is confident that the banks will roll over the group's credit facilities, analysts say Pentos needs additional funds.

Borrowings were about £45 million at the end of last year but analysts expect the sum to exceed £75 million after the payment of suppliers and landlords. City sources believe that the banks are reluctant to commit more facilities without a refinancing.

Mr McGrath has been battling to turn the group round since he took over in January

last year. Some of his actions have been controversial. In December, he put the group's Athena chain into receivership, sparking a wave of protests from suppliers.

Pentos's latest problems are an embarrassment to Sir Kit McMahon, its non-executive chairman. Sir Kit is a former chairman of Midland Bank and previously held the post of Deputy Governor of the Bank of England.

Pentos refused to comment on the negotiations.

Tempus, page 26

The pension.

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*October 1994 issue, Personal Pension Plans Survey: lowest charges over 5, 10, 15, 20 and 25 years. Foreign & Colonial Management Ltd (regulated by FIMRO and the Personal Investment Authority) or its subsidiaries are the Managers of the investment trusts. The value of shares and the income from them can fall as well as rise and you may not get back the full amount invested. Past performance is no guide to the future. Tax benefits may vary and their value depends on individual circumstances.

The Great Privatised Energy Utility Farce

Should your daughter prove insistent about going on the stage, perhaps you should encourage her to join a GenCo, or a REC, or British Gas. Limited talent? No problem. Urge her in the direction of a regulatory troupe such as Offer or Ofgas, particularly if she has a smattering of Austrian. Either way, the smell of greasepaint is guaranteed. Quite clearly, *The Great Privatised Energy Utility Farce* is going to run and run.

As with so many farces, the original script was of a relatively serious mould — long on messages about competition, efficiency and consumer choice. This never really got off the ground, but the scriptwriters — mostly professors — were given their head, and, as the actors ad-libbed, a "hit" was born. So uproarious is this farce that it is reviewed, almost on a daily basis, on the front pages of British newspapers. Not much interest is shown in the US, but *The Great Privatised Energy Utility Farce* regularly makes *News at Ten*.

Such stuff is much bigger than a mere critic, or financial scribe, can cope with. But bear with me. It is difficult to recap because the plot was long ago overtaken by sub-plots. There is, of course, a mandatory amount of slapstick. A man called Ed and another called Ced are regularly tortured by a man with a rose in his lapel. Excruciating! Chorus girls have been replaced by men, whose privatised parts are covered (quite liberally) by share options. The high kicks are a favourite on *News at Ten*.

One of the plots involves the sale of 40 per cent of National Power and PowerGen, known, on stage, as GenCos. This sale — more a giveaway — represents wonderful value for shareholders, but not for taxpayers. City analysts find the farce riveting, not least because of the extraordinary dividend projections. Outside the theatre, in a world of wind and rain, companies do not enjoy dividend covers of 3½ and exponential growth rates. The depth of the dividend con-

fess, courtesy of Offer, underlines the fact that shares in the GenCos were sold off too cheaply in 1991. With an election on the not too distant horizon, history is repeating itself. The reality, of course, is that the whole electricity supply industry (ESI) was sold too cheaply. When the script was penned, all looked so neat. GenCos were supposed to be in perfect competition through the pool that established the market clearing price. National distribution, a natural monopoly, was vested in GridCo. Last, but not least, the regional electricity companies (RECs) were responsible for local distribution and marketing. Unfortunately, come this proliferation, few understood how the industry worked, let alone how to value or regulate it. That is why it has been undervalued and under-regulated.

Other sub-plots intermingle. The ESI has cut a swathe through the mining industry with a destructiveness that would have impressed Mary Shelley. The supposedly pleasurable effects of



MELVYN MARCKUS

immersion in the pool were so lost on ICI that even Offer tried to impose a price cap. The RECs are hatching plans to sell their holdings in GridCo for more than the Government obtained for the taxpayer when it sold the RECs. (This skit has people rocking in the aisles with laughter). There is, however, more. Assisted by Offer's absurdly generous price reviews, the RECs, spurred on by the

prospect of being permitted to raise their own electricity generation limits, are intent on becoming vertically integrated regional monopolies. Alas, their success may prove their undoing. Enter, stage left, money-hungry "hones", witness Trafalgar House's £1.2 billion takeover bid for Northern Electric. To complicate matters further, the GenCo sale plot and the Trafalgar/Northern sub-plot have become entwined. Offer, it would appear, saw no need to refer the bid to the MMC. "Heza", as the President of the Board of Trade is known on stage, also chose to duck the issue, presumably because the audience could not be expected to know its REC from its GenCo. Audience participation, in the GenCo share sale, is vital.

Time, perhaps, for the playwrights — who work together on an informal sort of basis — to set aside bashfulness and bathe in the limelight. Step forward Professor Stephen Littlechild, the Director-General of Offer and a leading proponent of the Austrian school

of economics, indelibly associated with the work of Hayek. Littlechild advised on the regulatory regime for British Telecom and the water industry. He was the author, in the early eighties, of *Ten Steps to Denationalisation*. He also co-wrote, with his mentor Professor Michael Beesley, *The Regulation of the Privatized Utilities in the UK* — a work that displays a schizoid obsession with subdividing everything between its monopoly and competitive elements and its production/generation, distribution and marketing functions. Freud, another Austrian, might have had a thing or two to say about this. Nor should we forget Professor Colin Robinson — "Blue Robbo" — who has stalked the great British Gas whale with an Ahab-like obsession for almost three decades. So far, it has escaped dismemberment, but for how long? Robinson's wife, Eileen Marshall, has departed from Offer (leaving behind a fiasco in competitive metering) to join Clare Spottiswoode at Ofgas. Are we set

for a rerun of the ESI comedy of errors as the same gang attempts to restructure the gas industry? The final act of *The Great Privatised Energy Utility Farce* centres around Littlechild presiding over such chaos and pondering the infinitesimal deconstruction of almost everything into evermore furiously competing fractiles.

Earlier this month, on February 10, Offer invited representations or objections in respect of its proposed modification of REC licences to implement the latest distribution price controls. A matter of days later, Littlechild also revealed that he had started discussions with Trafalgar House regarding appropriate licence amendments.

Should Littlechild step off the boards he could, but almost certainly won't, choose to re-think Offer's miscalculated price controls. He could, of course, also refer the Trafalgar House bid to the MMC. And there, waiting in the wings on the MMC's electricity panel, is Professor Robinson.

Whistleblowers sue Lucas and TI Group in US

BY NEIL BENNETT, DEPUTY BUSINESS EDITOR

TWO of Britain's leading engineering groups are being sued by whistleblowers in America on behalf of the US Defence Department. The two men, who both lost their jobs at the companies, stand to make millions of dollars if their cases are successful.

Yesterday the US Justice Department took over a case brought by a former Lucas Industries employee which alleges that the group defrauded the Pentagon by concealing defects in military components it supplied. The group immediately attacked the case as "grossly exaggerated and based on flawed analysis". It pledged to fight the case through the courts.

Meanwhile, TI Group was hit by a suit from a former employee of its Dowty Woodville Polymer subsidiary. The action alleges that the company overcharged the Pentagon for aircraft wing

seals and claims \$20 million in damages.

Both cases have been brought under the "Qui Tam" legal arrangements, which enable an individual to sue on behalf of the US Government. If successful, they can receive up to a third of the damages awarded.

The whistleblower in the Lucas case informed the US Defence Department about the shortcomings in Lucas's testing in 1993. Yesterday Lucas said he had been dismissed for failing to follow quality assurance procedures.

The case against Lucas was taken over by the US Justice Department a day after the Pentagon banned the group from bidding for any future defence work. The row concerns the reliability of the gearboxes made by Lucas Western, a subsidiary in Utah, for the US Navy's F/A-18 fighter. Last month Lucas was fined \$18.5 million after admitting that its staff falsified quality certificates for the gearboxes, but the civil case between Lucas and the US Navy remains unsettled.

Lucas said yesterday that the gearboxes exceed the reliability demanded in the Navy's contracts and that it has invested millions of dollars to prevent any further failure of its testing procedures.

TI said yesterday that it had not received formal notification of the action. "We will investigate it and defend it appropriately," a spokesman said. "Our procedures and policies are first class and our prices competitive."

TI acquired Dowty Woodville Polymer in 1992 as part of Dowty, when Jeffrey Thistlethwaite, the whistleblower, had already been made redundant. TI said the subsidiary's turnover is only £1 million a year.

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Sir Gordon Brunton, chairman, and Farad Azima

Banging the drum for profits at Verity

BY PHILIP PANGALOS

VERITY GROUP, the Wharfedale loudspeakers to Premier drum kits group, is confident after tuning in to more than doubled first half profits.

The company reported a 105 per cent surge in pre-tax profits to £905,000 in the six months to December 31 (£444,000), on turnover ahead 30 per cent to £15.1 million.

Profits were boosted by a £215,000 exceptional gain from the sale of Touchwood Industries as Verity completed the disposal of non-core businesses. There is again no interim dividend, despite a 30 per cent jump in earnings to 0.3p (0.2p) a share, though the company intends to recommend a final dividend when the full year outcome is known.

Farad Azima, Verity's chief executive, who took the helm a couple of years ago, is confident about prospects. He said: "We have three nice businesses and things are looking good."

Verity shares firmed ½p to 94p.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Profits dip at Union Bank of Switzerland

UNION BANK OF SWITZERLAND, the largest Swiss bank, said profits fell 29 per cent to SF1.6 billion (£300 million) last year from a record SF2.3 billion in 1993. The bank blamed adverse movements in interest rates for the decline. Robert Studer, president of the bank, said: "We must be open about the fact that we clearly miscalculated developments in interest rates."

Trading revenues fell 64 per cent to SF1 billion after jumping 74 per cent in 1993. But the bank expects good group results in 1995 if markets recover. Mr Studer said, UBS said it would propose an unchanged dividend of SF32 per bearer share and SF16.40 francs per registered share at its annual meeting in April. It also plans to propose a reduction in the size of its board of directors to 20 members from 23.

M&G to spend £20m

RAPID growth in new business at M&G Group, the fund manager, coupled with competitive pressures, has prompted a £20 million investment programme to improve efficiencies. The three-year investment will cover the cost of redesigning the group's systems and processes and its IT infrastructure. Some job losses are expected among the group's 800 staff, but the number will depend on M&G's future volume of business. In the past five years it has increased 50 per cent.

Ranger Oil slides

RANGER OIL, the Canadian oil and gas company with extensive North Sea assets, reported US\$6.1 million net earnings, compared with \$20.2 million in 1993, because of higher interest costs and tax charges, coupled with lower oil prices. Oil and gas revenues increased to \$152.7 million (US\$147.9 million). Oil production averaged 15,039 bpd (13,779 bpd). Acquisitions and new production from the Columbia field boosted fourth-quarter output to 21,135 bpd.

Honeysuckle slips

SHARES in Honeysuckle Group, the USM-quoted designer of women's wear, fell 10p to 59p after a mild winter and unexpected delivery difficulties held back profits growth. Pre-tax profits edged up to £840,000 in the 26 weeks to November 30, against £834,000 last time, as turnover fell to £10.7 million, from £12.7 million. Earnings slip to 6.5p (6.7p) a share. The interim dividend is maintained at 1p and is payable on March 23.

Four firms on PLC awards shortlist

BY OUR CITY STAFF

NEVER underestimate what company chairmen will do to secure votes for the Coopers & Lybrand PLC Awards.

On hearing of his business's nomination as company of the year in the 1994 awards, Dr Fred Westlake, chairman of First Technology, wrote to all shareholders urging them to "exercise your voting right in this good cause".

Although the company fell short of supplying a stamped addressed envelope, Dr Westlake gave the name and address of Graham Cole, the Coopers & Lybrand partner in charge of the awards, which are held every year in association with *The Times*. "We are

proud that First Technology has been shortlisted as one of four nominees for this prestige award," he wrote.

But will Dr Westlake's efforts prove enough to secure victory on March 9, when the winner will be announced at a dinner at the Grosvenor House Hotel in London? Mr Cole remains tight-lipped. "It will be a close run thing," he said.

First Technology is vying for the top award with Ashted Group, the plant hire company and a previous winner; Sheriff Holdings, another plant hire company; and Taylor Nelson, the market research consultancy.

Hi-Tec gives warning

BY SUSAN GLICHRIST

SHARES in Hi-Tec Sports fell 6p to 29p yesterday after the leisurewear group issued a profit warning.

Hi-Tec said that it expects to generate only a modest profit in its second half after continued tough trading. Profit before exceptional charges for the full year will therefore be below current market expectations. Analysts trimmed profit forecasts from about £2 million to just above £1 million.

Hi-Tec, when reporting in-

terim results in September, spoke of fierce competition from bigger sports shoe manufacturers and predicted that margins would continue to decline until at least this spring. Yesterday, it confirmed that this had been so.

The shares fell from 78p to 45p after September's unveiling of a £7.11 million interim loss following exceptional restructuring costs of £5.91 million.

Tempus, page 26

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buy	Bank Sell
Australia \$	2.26	2.09
Austria Sch	17.44	16.94
Belgium Fr	51.07	46.77
Canada \$	2.321	2.161
Cyprus Cyp£	0.788	0.714
Denmark Kr	9.36	8.77
France Fr	7.76	7.11
Germany Dm	6.82	7.97
Greece Dr	2.49	2.29
Hong Kong \$	351.00	325.00
Ireland P£	12.33	11.93
Israel S	1.05	0.97
Italy Lira	5,295	4,925
Japan Yen	163.00	152.00
Malta M£	0.611	0.56
Netherlands Gld	2.770	2.540
Norway Kr	10.88	10.08
Portugal Esc	253.50	235.00
S. Africa Rd	74	5.80
Spain Pta	212.50	198.50
Sweden Kr	12.15	11.26
Switzerland Fr	2.12	1.94
Turkey Lira	1,988	6,687.0
USA \$	1.988	1.588

Notes for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclay Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading previously.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

Although the announcement was not a lip-smacking mega-bid, it was nonetheless significant. Hanson was to have 34 of its American businesses — and going with them was a far more important element of the operation: David Clarke, chief executive of Hanson Inc. . .

Business Focus — *The Sunday Times* tomorrow

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ARTHUR D LITTLE: Tom Sommerlatte and Tim Simpson

Doctors who buck the consultant stereotype

partners in power

Two section heads in one of Europe's most dynamic firms of management consultants talk to Jon Ashworth

An engineer who fled East Germany for a new life in the West has risen to become the elder statesman of one of Europe's most dynamic management consultancies. His UK counterpart is a bluff Yorkshireman who plays the church organ and does not suffer fools.

Clients expecting a rather pompous stereotype are in for a pleasant surprise when they meet "The Doctors". Tom Sommerlatte and Tim Simpson.

Think of "management consultant", and an image of bold stripes and red braces springs to mind, aloof figures firing meaningless jargon at bemused clients. A few disdainful tips about "adding value" and they are gone, leaving a hefty invoice in their wake.

A stereotype, of course, associated with consultancies where white shirts and red ties are said to be de rigueur.

Sommerlatte, who runs the European practice of Arthur D Little, is unlikely to put colour co-ordination high on his list of priorities. Simpson, head of the UK division, may look the part, but he is probably happier mucking out the stables at his farm in West Sussex. Both men have their feet firmly on the ground.

The eponymous Dr Little was a professor of chemical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the 1980s.

While less cerebral types were bringing the Wild West to heel, the worthy doctor hit on the idea of selling his knowledge as a service. A research and development company was the result. Management consultancy evolved after the Second World War.

About the same time, a factory-owning family in Dessau in the newly partitioned East Germany was struggling to adjust to commu-

nist rule. The Sommerlatte's owned a glass manufacturing company which was expropriated by the new rulers in 1951, and the 13-year-old Sommerlatte crossed the border with his parents and younger brother to start afresh.

Sommerlatte thrived on the new life. After school in Bavaria, he studied chemical engineering at the University of Berlin, then continued his studies at the University of Rochester in New York, finally obtaining a PhD from the University of Paris.

The late Sixties found him based at the nuclear research centre in Heidelberg, working for clients including Nasa. "We were programming robots to do chemical analysis on the Moon," he recalls. A belief that research could be conducted more efficiently encouraged him to read for an MBA at the Insead business school at Fontainebleau near Paris, and it was from here, in 1971, that he joined Arthur D Little in Brussels.

And there he remained. A quarter of a century later, Arthur D Little has grown into a sprawling organisation, with 2,500 employees and a huge European presence.

Sommerlatte, 56, is based in Wiesbaden near Frankfurt, but is typically "on the road" three days a week, visiting regional offices from Madrid to Prague.

His board meetings must be a sight to behold. Just about every European nationality is represented. English is the common language. "If you close your eyes, you can picture who is speaking," he chuckles.

Sommerlatte, in his way, is the consummate modern European. He speaks English, French and German, and a smattering of Russian, a legacy of school behind the Iron Curtain. His wife, Christine, is French, and they speak French at home. They have 11 children, aged from 26 to six, and live in an upper-middle class suburb. One son is at Harvard, there is a daughter in Paris, and one of the other girls is a nun in a monastery in the South of France. They have a holiday home near La Rochelle on the west coast of France, and enjoy sailing. Sommerlatte loves windsurfing.

It goes on. He is an acclaimed artist — "abstract paintings, oil paintings, etchings... I like colours" — and collects classic cars, a passion he shares with his brother, Horst, who designed the interior of the Airbus and is now a university professor. Between them, they own three Austin Healeys, two Porsches and a couple of Alfa Romeos. "He



"We speak the same language as our clients. Being thought of as talking down to them is a style we try to avoid." Tim Simpson, left, and Tom Sommerlatte

repairs them and I drive them."

This is Simpson's second brush with the world of management consultancy. Now 48, he joined Arthur D Little in 1990 after a long career in the electronics industry, including a stint as managing director of Cray Computers. A "simple" Yorkshire boy, he grew up in Leeds and won a scholarship to Cambridge, where he took a first in mathematics.

A brief spell in software services led on to Colorado State University, where he obtained a PhD in maths and computer science. He joined McKinsey as a computer specialist at the age of 28. "I enjoyed McKinsey enormously, but there was always something of a tension, because I didn't know as much about industry as I would have liked," he recalls. "I was acting out

a role to some extent." He left to pursue a career running factories for companies, including Eurotherm and, ultimately, Cray. "It was a set of experiences that complemented the Arthur D Little experience very well."

Brought in as managing director of the Berkeley Square office to add a touch of young blood, Simpson has seen the firm emerge from the recession into a new period of expansion. It has started offering corporate finance advice alongside merchant banks — "checking out the business plans, seeing whether they will work in reality" — and advising on deals such as the Leeds-Hallifax merger. Travel and tourism is another new sideline, helping the Republic of Ireland, South Africa and the

developing nations of Eastern Europe with their infrastructure. Home is a small farm in Amberley, with ample room for his family and horses. His wife, Rosalind, pens the "Ros Writes" column in the West Sussex County Times. They have a boy and a girl, aged 14 and 11.

Simpson is suitably flattering about his boss: "Tom is astonishingly productive. Every vacation, he goes off and writes another business book. He's really created a team across Europe." Sommerlatte responds in kind. "Tim is a very important element of the team."

Both men talk of the huge potential for growth. "British clients are becoming much more sophisticated in their use of consultants," says Simpson. "The last recession, after the early Eighties and the Thatcher years, has really

made British business much better managed. The problems are no longer basic ones."

They concede that consultants are all too often regarded with suspicion by potential clients, but say the firm's strong links with industry give it an edge. "We hire from industry where others take graduates straight from business school," says Sommerlatte. "Clients and consultants speak the same language. Should we make an acquisition? Should we penetrate new markets? How can we avoid risks? You can compare it to hiring an architect for a new factory. We help them to understand their needs and devise a solution."

Simpson could not agree more. "Management consultants are sometimes perceived as talking down to their clients," he says. "That's a style we try to avoid."

Brand experts guide firms through marketing jungle

One would love to be a fly on the wall in the boardroom of Unilever, the Anglo-Dutch household products group that makes the Persil range of washing powder. It all started so well: Unilever spent a reported £200 million developing and promoting Persil Power in the UK and Ormo Power on the Continent. Then pictures of rotting underpants began appearing — proof, it was said, that Power's manganese catalyst destroyed fabrics. Procter & Gamble, the company behind Ariel Ultra, was quick to cash in.

The last twist of the knife came this week, when Unilever admitted to writing off £57 million in unusable goods. Sir Michael Perry, chairman of the group's UK arm, described the episode as "the greatest marketing setback in Unilever's history. Now, puzzled consumers are being offered New Generation Persil, which harks back to friendly, caring themes, and

Persil Power got it spectacularly wrong. Jon Ashworth hears the verdict of an image-maker

Persil Finesse, a non-bleach product.

The experts will tell you that it need never have happened. Companies spend up to £250,000 a time seeking the advice of so-called brand experts — consultants upon whom manufacturers rely to test consumer reaction, advise on packaging and promotion, and devise marketing strategies. The public rarely hears about them, but evidence of their work is everywhere.

The new brooms at Saatchi & Saatchi turned to one of their own companies in their quest for a new name. Siegel & Gale, an American marketing, communications and design firm, finally came up with the goods this week — Cordiant. Shareholders are

to vote on the proposed change next month. Ladbroke, the hotels, betting and gaming group, began hunting for a more international name last year, but has put its plans on "permanent hold".

New products need to be groomed just as carefully. Corporate history is littered with examples of product launches that have gone horribly wrong. Shell spent a reported £8 million on developing and marketing Formula Shell. Launched in 1986 as the "most advanced petrol in the world", it was withdrawn two years later because of consumer unease over whether the additive in the petrol damaged engines. Not so much rotting under-

pants as corroded cylinder heads.

Richard Zamboni, deputy managing director of Craon Lodge & Knight (CLK), a brand consultancy based in west London, blames marketing disasters on this scale on "corporate megalomania" by companies that become too powerful and myopically try to force their ideas onto the market.

"Persil is traditionally a caring brand," Zamboni says. "Then along comes Power and it's zap! between the eyes. Now, with Finesse, they're back to the caring image."

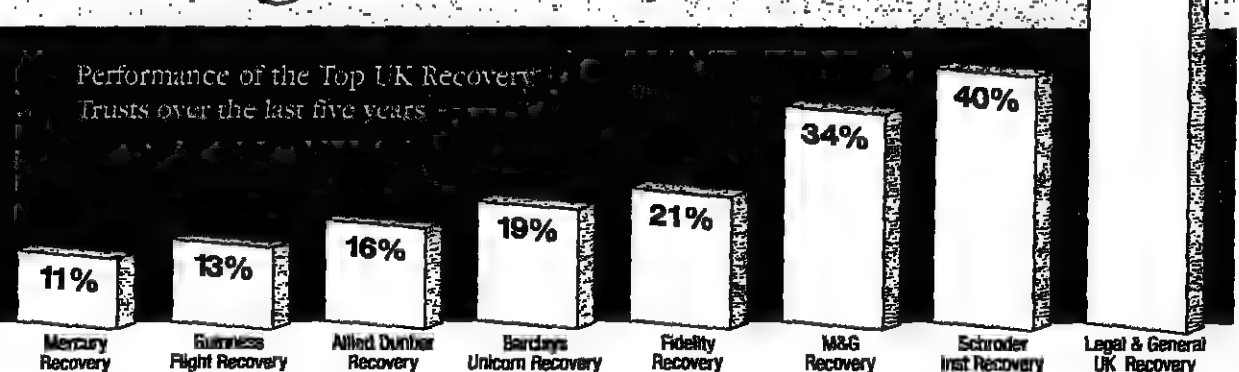
CLK and rival brand specialists, such as Interbrand, earn their keep by developing new brands or trying to revive dated products. CLK came up with the name and packaging for Cadbury's TimeOut snack, for instance, and helped National Westminster Bank to position its insurance sales arm, NatWest Life.

Zamboni says that the 1990s have seen the arrival of the "classless brand" — one that does not try to align itself with working-class or middle-class values. He cites First Direct, the telephone banking arm of Midland Bank, as a classic classless brand. "You don't have to be a sort of person to use First Direct," he says. "They are not seeking to identify you by your needs."

Testing new ground, CLK was recently asked to develop a marketing strategy for an imaginary marijuana product. It came up with Seventh Heaven — a collection of marijuana-laced chocolates aimed at females aged 25 to 40. The firm will feature in a Channel 4 documentary on March 4 as part of "Pot Night", an evening of documentaries and films about cannabis.

Not everyone uses brand consultants — and one need only look to America for proof. Examples of products that could do with the CLK touch include the unfortunately named Meeter's Kraut Juice, and a shampoo called Gee. Your Hair Smells Terrific.

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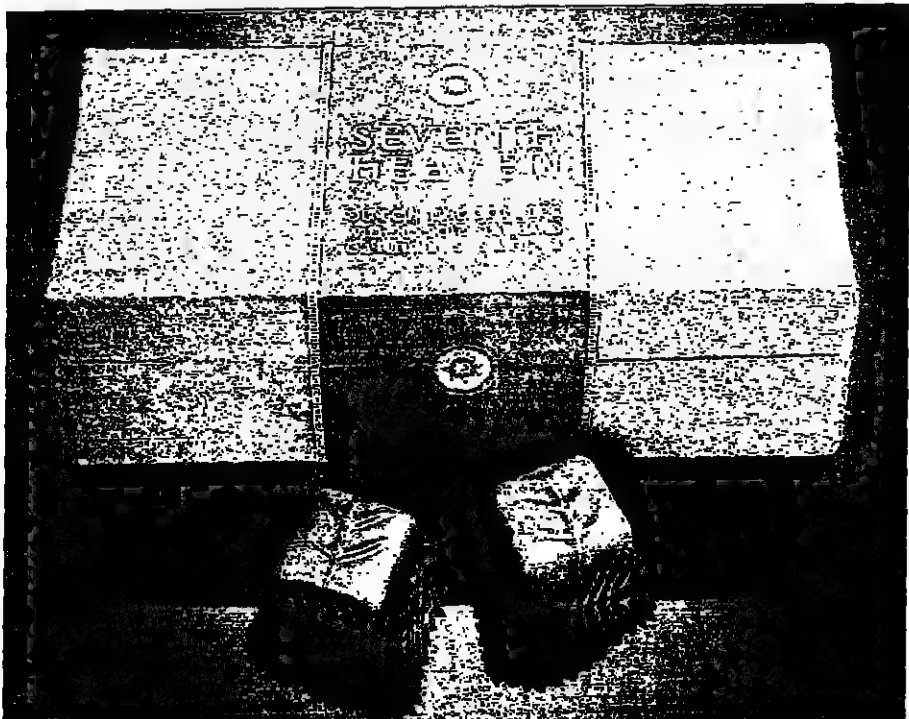
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Seventh Heaven: marketing an imaginary product, marijuana-laced chocolates

STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

United Friendly giveaway lifts other life assurers

SHARES of the big life assurance companies were in demand as it emerged that they have hundreds of millions of pounds to give away to shareholders.

United Friendly stood out with a leap of 91p to 604p, after it issued details of a financial bonanza for shareholders worth almost £300 million. The company says it has identified surplus funds of £275 million which are attributable to shareholders. The funds are known as orphan assets, unclaimed assets trapped in a life fund.

The group made its move after applying successfully to the Department of Trade and Industry for approval to set up a new life funds structure. Under these proposals, 90 per cent of the surplus from the with-profits business is allocated to policyholders, and the remainder to shareholders. A total of £275 million is expected to be set aside for shareholders, out of total assets of more than £2 billion.

Brokers said the news was likely to have a positive effect on profits, and result in sizeable dividend increases. The lead taken by United Friendly is expected to be followed by other life assurance companies and provide a useful boost to their share prices. In anticipation, Refuge Assurance climbed 39p to 322p, Britannic 71p to 505p, Legal & General 7p to 448p, and Prudential 9p to 303p.

Wall Street's record-breaking run overnight which carried the Dow Jones industrial average back above the 4,000 level, failed to inspire investors in London, where political worries continued to overshadow events. Next week's House of Commons vote on Europe is rapidly being interpreted in the City as a vote of confidence.

As a result, investors were inactive. The FT-SE 100 index never looked like making headway and quickly lost ground as Wall Street also failed to keep Thursday's momentum going. It managed to close just above its worst of the day with 11.6 points at 3,037.7, a fall on the week of just 6.5, as fewer than 500 million shares were traded.

Northern Electric rallied 5p to £10.58 on turnover of fewer than 2 million shares. Institutional investors have been unable to contain their disappointment over the increased terms from Trafalgar House



Warning about Frank van Wezel, chairman of HI-Tec Sports

to £11 a share, valuing Northern at £1.23 billion. It had been hoped that Trafalgar would pitch its terms at between £11.50 and £12 a share. Brokers say the move has enhanced Northern's chances of remaining independent. Trafalgar, which accompanied its terms with a forecast of first half losses, eased 1p to 63½p. Meanwhile, speculators

Rank Organisation climbed 12p to 378p after a presentation for fund managers arranged by Henderson Crosthwaite, the broker. They heard that the sale of part of its Rank Xerox stake was a possible move and its forecast of a 10 per cent rise in turnover and 50 per cent rise in profits was reiterated. Rank's AGM is on Tuesday.

have turned their attention to Yorkshire Electricity, up 12p at 832p, where they have been persistent lack of a bid from Hanson, 4p down at 237½p. Brokers also refuse to rule out a bid from one of the power generators, such as National Power, 7p off at 475p, and PowerGen, 6p down at 513p. Some positive comments from UBS, the broker, was good for Carlton Communications, which finished 13p better at 891p.

to 248p. Pearson, 5p to 560p and Mirror Group, 5p to 136p.

Lucas Industries continued to lose ground, slipping a further 15p to 173½p, for a two-day deficit of 8½p, reflecting this week's decision by a US court to prevent the company tendering for any more defence contracts.

Last month Lucas was fined \$18.5 million after admitting having made false claims about the inspection of equip-

ment supplied to the US military.

In a separate move TI Group eased 1p to 330p as it tried to allay worries over their legal action it faces over claims of over-pricing contracts for polymer goods to the US military. The company points out that polymer sales to the US military last year amounted to just £1 million.

HI-Tec Sports dropped 6p to 29p after issuing its second profits warning in under six months. The group, headed by Frank van Wezel, says that only a modest additional pre-tax profit will be generated during the last six months of the year. In September the group reported £1 million first-half pre-tax profits which were wiped out by exceptional charges of £5.6 million relating to the group's restructuring programme.

Honeywell, the clothing manufacturer, fell 10p to 59p as the market expressed disappointment with first-half figures showing pre-tax profits of £5.000 ahead of £840,000. The group blamed the mild winter and unexpected delivery problems.

Chairman David Serr was hopeful that cost-cutting moves would start to come through on the bottom line during the 12 months. GILT-EDGED: Gilts suffered losses stretching to almost £1 as investors began taking profits after the gains of the past few days. Dealers said overnight falls on the US bond market triggered the move, after prices were squeezed higher following Wednesday's auction. An unexpected rise in US durable goods during January meant that prices closed near their low for the day.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt tumbled £29½ to £101½ as a total of 73,000 contracts were completed. At the longer end of the conventional market, benchmark Treasury 8 per cent 2013 lost £1½ to £97½, while in shorts, Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was £21½ down at £94½.

NEW YORK: US shares were lower after investors used a stronger than expected January durable goods report to take profits. At midday the Dow Jones industrial average was down 4.03 points at 3,999.30. Declining shares led advancing issues by about 11 to eight.

At the longer end of the conventional market, benchmark Treasury 8 per cent 2013 lost £1½ to £97½, while in shorts, Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was £21½ down at £94½.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):
Dow Jones 3,999.30 (-4.03)
S&P Composite 486.71 (-0.60)

Tokyo:
Nikkei Average 17,472.94 (-357.08)

Hong Kong:
Hang Seng 8,218.95 (-242.54)

Amsterdam:
EEX Index 4,100.60 (-0.80)

Sydney:
ASX 1,911.1 (-17.68)

Frankfurt:
DAX 2,118.64 (-0.40)

Singapore:
Straits 2,114.52 (-26.48)

Brussels:
General 7,006.91 (-5.68)

Paris:
CAC-40 1,805.74 (-21.27)

Zurich:
SIX Gen 6,229.60 (-0.60)

London:
FT 100 3,037.7 (-11.6)
FT-SE Mid 250 3,037.7 (-11.6)
FT-SE Euro Stoxx 100 3,037.7 (-11.6)
FT A All-Share 3,037.7 (-11.6)
FT Non Financials 3,037.7 (-11.6)
FT Gold Miners 3,037.7 (-11.6)
FT Real Estate 3,037.7 (-11.6)
FT Govt Secs 3,037.7 (-11.6)
Bargains 3,037.7 (-11.6)
SEAQ Volume 3,037.7 (-11.6)
US\$ (Massachusetts) 3,037.7 (-11.6)
German Mark 3,037.7 (-11.6)
Exchange Index 3,037.7 (-11.6)
Bank of England official rate 3,037.7 (-11.6)
ESCU 3,037.7 (-11.6)
ESDR 3,037.7 (-11.6)
RPI 3,037.7 (-11.6)

RECENT ISSUES

Bath Press (10) 13 ...
GET Group (125) 128 ...
Inv Tst of Inv Tst 86 ...
Inv Tst of Inv Tst Ws 57 ...
Lazard Bria Ltd 49½ ...
Lazard Bria Ltd Ws 29½ ...
MCTT S Cap (35) 34 ...
MCTT S Inc (35) 36 ...
Penitex Oil 85 ...
Photobion (150) 156 ...
Westest Trust 11 ...

RIGHTS ISSUES

BTP n/p (225) 24 ...
Bath Press n/p (10) 3 ...
Cadbury Sch Cn Lp n/p 185 ...
Euro Colour n/p (57) 20 ...
Nat Home Lns n/p (110) 2 ...
Shorro n/p (90) 2 ...

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:
Berkeley Group 329½ (-6p)
Broken Hill 562½ (-3p)
Sime Darby 145½ (-7p)
Mintel 305½ (-16p)
Tesco 378½ (-8p)
Rank Org 375½ (-12p)
Cattell 157½ (-6p)
Govett 300½ (-7p)
Provent 556½ (-12p)
MEPC 386½ (-8p)

FALLS:
Tibury Douglas 453p (-10p)
RAC Group 214p (-8p)
Redland 439p (-7p)
Waterhouse 685p (-5p)
Charlton 757p (-7p)
Johnson Matthey 514p (-16p)
Amersham 829p (-5p)
Glasco 629p (-7p)
Mays 333p (-10p)
Honeywell 599p (-20p)
Wellcome 1011p (-5p)
Arjo Wiggins 248p (-16p)

Closing Prices Page 28

TEMPUS

On Golden Pond

LOOKING to the future, insurance industry pundits see little but gloom for traditional medium-sized and smaller life companies. Lacking the volume to cut costs, they will be squeezed between price competition under the new disclosure rules and heavier regulatory costs. Lacking either guaranteed distribution, like bancassurance, or the selling power of the Prudential and top mutuals, they will be squeezed in a post-industrial market short of endowment mortgages and premium relief. Mergers are forecast. A private retirement home has even been set up for smaller fry.

That, at least, is the theory. Meanwhile, past caution is proving something of a vein of gold, once companies and their actuaries can work out how to mine it. London & Manchester showed the way: United Friendly Group has hit the jackpot. After two years of

detailed work, it has managed to free nearly 14 per cent of its life fund from limbo to provide income for shareholders. At the same time, it has boosted policyholders' bonuses, reserved against investment risks and established a proper 40:10 split of on-going life fund profits in favour of policyholders.

Analysts believe this would enable UFG to double its dividend, raising the potential yield, after yesterday's share price jump, to nearly 7 per cent. If UFG wants to remain in the game, it might well choose instead to plough the proceeds into reforms to enable it to compete in tomorrow's tougher markets. Only two things are certain. Comparable old-established companies, notably Refuge and Britannic, will have to follow suit. And if such companies do eventually merge, they will do so from a much stronger position.

Pentos

PENTOS's future looks decidedly precarious. Its banks appear reluctant to come up with fresh financing, but the group has few other options. Another rights issue is out of the question. Shareholders who participated in last March's fund-raising at 25p a share are still licking their wounds, with the shares at 8p. The banks appear in no mood to agree to a debt-for-equity swap, and, indeed, Pentos may not favour such an option. After all, banks make bad shareholders.

A trade sale of either the Ryman or Dillons chain would take too long, and, at this delicate stage, it may be difficult to achieve anything other than fire-sale prices. So, the group is left with little choice but to turn to third parties, such as venture capitalists, to inject new equity.

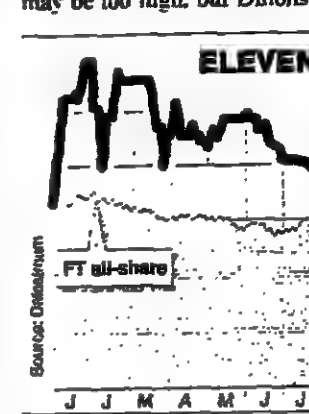
Lucas

LUCAS and the Pentagon seem to be engaged in a no-holds barred mud-slinging match. So far, the military are landing most of the direct hits. The US authorities hit Lucas with a painful one-two last week when the Pentagon's ban on Lucas bidding for future defence work was swiftly followed by the Justice Department taking over the whistleblower's civil case against the company.

All this is thoroughly acrimonious but is really little more than a negotiating posture. The Pentagon has been trying to squeeze a generous damages settlement out of Lucas for several months over the falsification of quality certificates on vital gearboxes on the F/A-18. Lucas made the mistake of providing \$3.6 million for the costs of the affair and subsequent reorganisation. Naturally, the Pentagon now wants most of this. But Lucas intended to spend most of the cash on some

into the business. Or face

reversibility. Should it come to that, the reputation of the banks will certainly be tarnished. Only two months ago, they let Athena be given the group a future. Yet they now appear to be jeopardising that future. The cost base of Dillons may be too high, but Dillons



badly-needed reorganisation

in its US factories, so the two sides are deadlocked. The affair has done no good for Lucas's share price — British investors do not understand the Americans' love of litigation. But the US defence business, although profitable, is a backwater in Lucas where the key to its prosperity lies in its automotive division. The shame is that these wranglings will be distracting George Simpson, chief executive, from the main task in hand.

Hi-Tec

THE Stock Exchange's insistence on companies producing trading statements at every turn is having curious consequences. Yesterday's two paragraphs from Hi-Tec, the running shoe group, merely reminded the market that it said at the half-year stage the second six months would be tough and then confirmed that they were.

Hoare Govett, the house

broker, translated this message into a cut in forecast profits for the full year from £2 million to £1 million or so. The shares fell 6p to 29p, a fresh low. The picture is complicated by Hi-Tec extending its trading year to April 30 from January 31.

Even that is unlikely to help Hi-Tec's figures. It has suffered from the retail downturn in the UK and US. Even without the trading statement it would have been possible to guess that the company had not thrived after Sears reported tough trading at its Olympus sports shops.

Shareholders, including Frank van Wezel, the chairman, with 52.8 per cent, must barely be able to recall the all-time high of 30p reached in May 1992. But that was before recession struck Nike and Reebok began discounting their upmarket brands and trading on Hi-Tec territory.

EDITED BY NEIL BENNETT

MOVERS OF THE WEEK

Company	Change	Price
United Friendly	+102p	605p
Refuge Assurance	+39p	322p
Britannic	+71p	505p
Legal & General	+7p	448p
Prudential	+9p	303p
Yorkshire Electricity	+12p	832p
Carlton Communications	+13p	891p
Rank Organisation	+12p	378p

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Subsidiary 125A

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interest rates now
and you won't
have to pick up
the pieces later.



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BARCLAYS

INTEREST RATE MANAGEMENT

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place ten business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

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Gits suffer sharp falls

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place ten business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1990/91	High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	P/E
39	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
40	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
41	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
42	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
43	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
44	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
45	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
46	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
47	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
48	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
49	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
50	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
51	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
52	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
53	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
54	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
55	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
56	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
57	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
58	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
59	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
60	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
61	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
62	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
63	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
64	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
65	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
66	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
67	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
68	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
69	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
70	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
71	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
72	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
73	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
74	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
75	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
76	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
77	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
78	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
79	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
80	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
81	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
82	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
83	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
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92	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
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96	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
97	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
98	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
99	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
100	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12

ENGINEERING, VEHICLES

39	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
40	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
41	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
42	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
43	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
44	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
45	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
46	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
47	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
48	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
49	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
50	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
51	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
52	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
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58	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
59	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
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61	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
62	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
63	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
64	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
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91	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
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93	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
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95	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
96	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
97	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
98	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
99	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
100	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12

FOOD MANUFACTURERS

39	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
40	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
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56	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
57	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
58	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
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60	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
61	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
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68	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
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96	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
97	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
98	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
99	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
100	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12

HEALTHCARE

39	11	10	Alcoa Inc	12	-1	-8.3	12
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DOWN TO EARTH 32

Patrick Moore
loses his
traveller's cheques

WEEKEND
MONEY

MONEY GUIDE

Personal equity
plans put
into focus



Homebuyers hit a wall of silence

Liz Dolan on a battle by negative-equity victims
for information on mortgage indemnity policies

There is still no sign of silence erected by mortgage lenders and insurers against requests to view mortgage indemnity guarantee (MIG) contracts. But pressure to get them to do so is intensifying as frustrated homebuyers and professional advisers alike begin to lose patience with their intransigence.

In the absence of definitive proof to the contrary, homebuyers are becoming increasingly suspicious that lenders are refusing to release the contracts because they have something to hide.

While the documents remain under lock and key, the almost certainly false hope will continue to grow among the country's 1.3 million borrowers currently trapped in their homes by negative equity that mortgage indemnity cover is the solution to their financial nightmares.

MIGs protect lenders against losses made on the sale of repossessed properties. Borrowers of more than 75 per cent of their property's value are nearly always forced to pay mortgage indemnity premiums, but cannot benefit from any payout.

Most people in this position are first-time buyers, many of whom cannot afford to pay premiums of, typically, £1,000 all at once. Consequently, they are added to the mortgage, thus attracting interest charges on top.

In addition, the payments extracted from borrowers may be higher than the sum actually handed over to the insurance company, with the balance going into the lender's coffers. Some lenders take the money and carry the risk themselves, without recourse to a outside insurance.

Even worse for those facing repossession, the insurance companies claim the right to recover from borrowers any money paid to lenders. This right lasts for 12 years after the claim has been settled so, people who are already suffering enormous financial problems face the possibility of being chased for thousands of pounds even though the insurance policy that they themselves financed has paid off the debt to the lender.

Legal & General, one of the biggest players in the mortgage indemnity field, says: "A

debt is a debt. An insurance company still has the right to claim the money in later years, when they are back on their feet again financially."

Frustrated by the impasse, Terry Hall, a former insurance broker, whose own home is worth about £15,000 less than his mortgage, has this week decided to set up a negative equity action group (NEAG) for fellow sufferers.

He is particularly keen to attract people with an interest in fighting the lenders' obstinate stand over the thorny question of MIG disclosures. As an insurance broker, Mr Hall learnt of at least one insurer that had been warned by its lawyers against pursuing borrowers for money after the lenders had claimed on the MIG contracts.

When the company looked into the question of suing the non-payers, its legal advisers said that, because the borrower had paid the premium,

**Insurers
claim right
to recover
money paid
to lenders**

there was a good case for the court finding that the insurer had no right to demand payment.

It was, therefore, decided that it was better to have some people paying than to risk a court ruling saying that no one had to pay. Mr Hall said he was told this story by the company's chief underwriter.

One of NEAG's principle ambitions is to amass enough support to take a test case to court to obtain a definitive ruling on a borrower's rights under a MIG policy.

This plan has the full backing of Paul Jenkins, a Hertford solicitor. He says: "A lot of angry people are coming to us for advice about their negative equity. It's so frustrating. I can't take these cases on because people who are heavily in debt can't afford to fund complicated and uncertain litigation, and because I can't guarantee we will be able to get hold of the policy. We think the borrower has an

undeniable right to see the policy to find out where they stand." (See article right).

Mr Hall and Mr Jenkins are increasingly concerned about unspecific and general advice given by self-styled specialists who say that MIG contracts can free borrowers from the negative-equity trap. The best-known of these specialist companies, Union Finance, attracts hundreds of inquiries each week from people who are so desperate for a solution that they are prepared to pay more than £300 for the company's initial advice.

According to several barristers consulted by Mr Jenkins, Union Finance's interpretation of this specialised area of law is almost certainly incorrect. "But what if a borrower tells a lender that they are following Union Finance's advice? I wrote to a lender warning them that one of my clients was doing just that and said I would only be able to convince him otherwise if they sent me a copy of the policy."

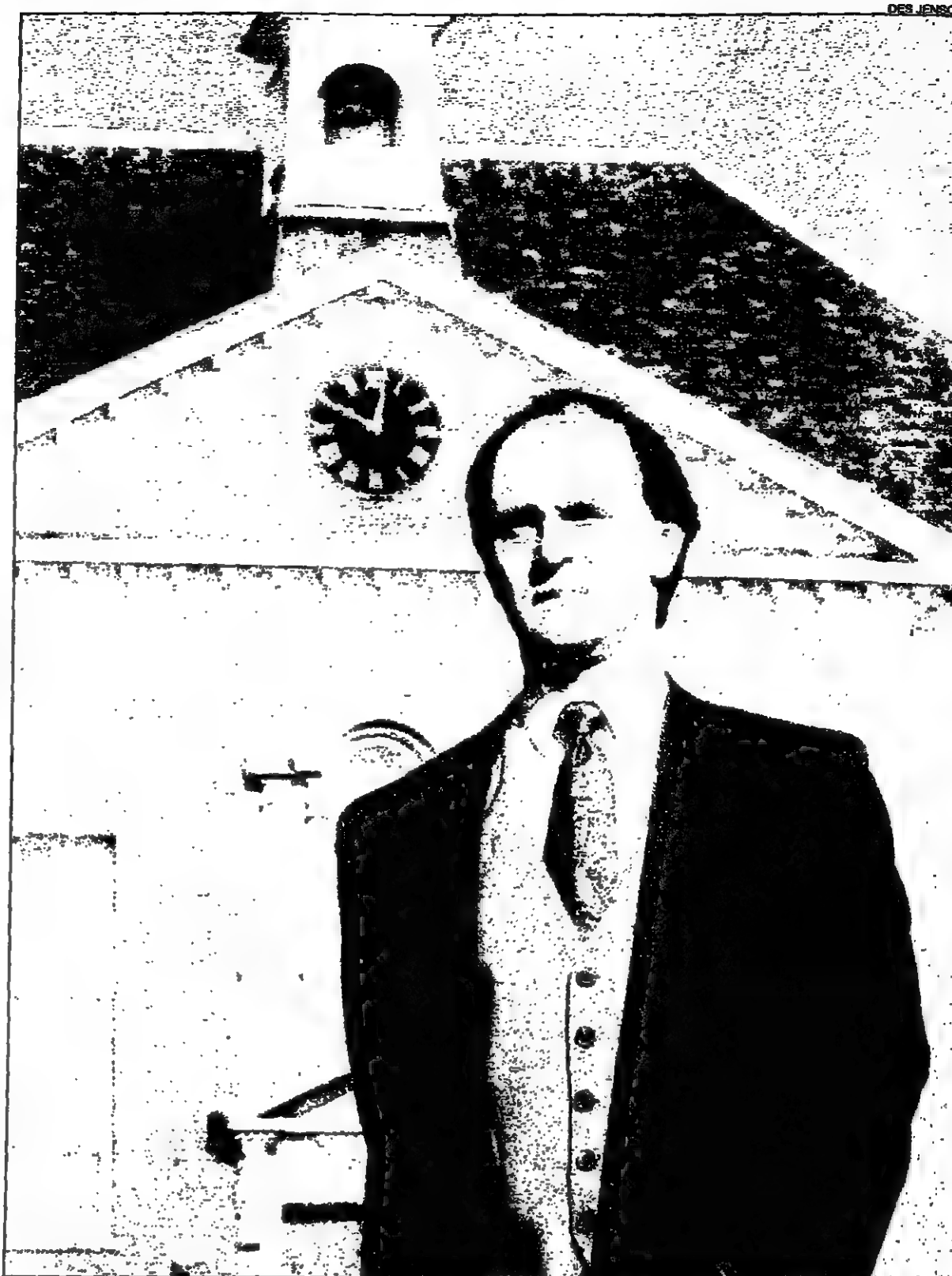
The lender has advised the client not to listen to Union Finance, but will not send the MIG contract, which would clear up any misunderstanding one way or the other. "Disclosure is an important starting point. I have told the lender that, unless he discloses the policy, he is not mitigating his losses when it comes to any future court action."

Legal & General said it would definitely not give its permission for borrowers to see contracts. A spokesman said: "These are long and complicated contracts. I don't think they would be convinced, anyway. It would just mean giving a lot of money to a lot of lawyers."

Lenders point to a ruling by a county court judge in Northampton last year that a Household Mortgage Corporation borrower was not, as he claimed, personally covered by the provisions in his MIG policy.

The judge said that it would be unfair to the insurer if the borrower did have this right because the homebuyer would then have been free to escape from his liability simply by failing to keep up payments.

Mr Jenkins is also concerned about the way MIGs were presented to borrowers when they first took out the mortgage. "It all goes back to the intention of the parties



Paul Jenkins, a solicitor, says that many angry people are asking for advice about their negative equity

'No right' to see contract

Mortgage lenders react to requests to see mortgage indemnity guarantee (MIG) contracts with the same horror as a Victorian lady asked to expose the leg of her table.

The Woolwich Building Society says: "Our borrowers have no right, legal or moral, to see the contract. It is a confidential document involving just two parties, us and the insurer."

But what if sight of a MIG contract saved a Union Finance client from making a terrible mistake? The Woolwich says: "Union Finance is the reason some people now have these expectations. Our borrowers will be counselled out of any misconceptions they may have. But, if they still choose to believe Union Finance, that is up to them."

The society adds: "We don't see why customers would be suspicious that lenders have something to hide. Why should it be assumed that the reason is because we have something to hide?"

The Household Mortgage Corporation says, intriguingly: "We are not in the business of raising false hopes. If they ask for the contract, the answer must be no. It would be a waste of their time. It's like asking your employer to see their building insurance policy."

The Halifax says: "We never allow borrowers to see contracts. They contain commercially sensitive information. We've negotiated certain terms and don't necessarily want our competitors to see them."

The fee used to be called a premium, but its name was changed early last year to an additional mortgage security fee to avoid confusion. It in no way relates specifically to a premium or contract.

The Household Mortgage Corporation says: "We used to have premiums. Now we have a high percentage advance charge for loans over 75 per cent."

Several lenders have now decided to rename their MIG premiums.

Weekend Money
is edited by
Anne Ashworth

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Four ways to have a flutter

These are trying times for those who like a sporting investment. On the turf the going is so heavy that form is an unreliable guide, and the markets look much the same. They offer one small consolation: no chance that the actual race will be scratched, but what can you back with any conviction? So you stick mainly (and wisely) to cash and short gilts. You can check that your medical insurance covers a jaw dislocated with yawning; or you can set aside a little silly money, and back rank outsiders, high-risk investments that might lose, or prove highly rewarding. Some are penny stocks, some far from it. This column lists four - not, please note, as tips, but because they illustrate the different ways you might choose to have a flutter.

The first, a buy-in-to-trouble play, is one of the world's four really big cement makers, on level capacity terms with Lafarge and Italcement. The catch is that it is Mexican. Cemex is going to have a terrible year in its home market, where construction has nearly collapsed since the crisis. There is a safety net, though: half the company's revenue base is now outside Mexico. It is the biggest cement company in Spain, a big player in other Latin American markets, and has \$500 million in US assets. Its strong suit is efficiency, with costs still being slashed. Its Achilles' heel is dollar debt that will cost over \$1 billion this year in interest and repayments, but manageable on any reasonable scenario. The temptation is a share price below \$4, down nearly 60 per cent from its recent peak, and a Barings recommendation.



INVESTMENT STRATEGY

ANTHONY
HARRIS

The second is a bet that the sky won't fall - not a company, but Argentine government bonds. Bonds in a high-risk portfolio? Yes, when they are provisionally dollar-denominated, and now yield up to 30 per cent. The bet here is that Argentina, which has got its inflation down from telephone numbers to about 3 per cent, will stick to its current hair-shirt policies, following the route pioneered by Chile. This includes a currency board, which means that the peso is currently fully dollar-backed; the risk is mainly electoral. A bet on Menem, then: a handsome pay-off if he survives.

The third is a domestic game of follow-my-leader, and a penny share. Black & Edgington may sound familiar - you probably saw the name on the marquee at the last wedding you attended. But this is history: turnover has been falling like a stone, and profits reached vanishing point in 1993. The sole attraction is that Ian Gowrie-Smith

and Nigel Wray, who have a loyal City fan club, have bought nearly 30 per cent. They built Medeva into a pharmaceutical success, and presumably intend to do something with B&E. Wait and see, then.

But a word about penny stocks. The price (in the 3p region for B&E) promises exciting volatility, since these shares move in 15 per cent steps; but dealing spreads are punishing. This is for a big rise, or nothing. The same applies, not so loud, to Verson, an engineering group, at about 15p. This one has profits all right: it is a price-earnings play.

Verson makes investment goods for motor factories, steel mills and can and drum-makers, here and in the US. Its weakness is its best-known name, Clearing International, which makes those huge presses you see in car factory pictures, but is desperately short of business. Its strengths: other businesses doing well, and a low-cost base, helped by dollar and sterling weakness. It has one contract to make big-name Japanese equipment, and hopes for more. The market has noticed the troubles more than the promise: hence a prospective pile of six on very cautious official forecasts, may be much lower. Plenty of upside there.

So take your pick of strategy: obvious risk at frightened prices, a management bet, or a highly generous price-earnings ratio. Any could prove rewarding, and add a bit of spice to your daily reading. But patience, especially in penny stocks: and even then, only a stake you can afford to lose. Nobody naps outsiders.

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Jean Eaglesham finds that the compensation guidelines are being reviewed

Pension victims face more delays

People who were persuaded to move from their employer's pension scheme five or more years ago should seriously consider taking legal advice rather than relying on the review process set up by City watchdogs, according to solicitors acting for members of the GMB, one of Britain's largest trade unions.

This view emerges as the struggle between the insurance industry and its regulators over the estimated £25 billion compensation due to victims of bad advice on pensions grows more bad tempered. There are now fears that insurance companies may follow independent financial advisers into the courts in an attempt to avoid their compensation obligations.

The Independent Financial Advisers Association (IFAA), a trade association, has already won the right to a judicial review of the compensation guidelines drawn up by the Securities and Investments Board (SIB), the top watchdog. The case has stopped much of the compensation process in its tracks, with many firms becoming reluctant to offer compensation before the ruling.

The argument centres on what constitutes advice, as insurers attempt to redefine thousands of deals as "execution only". In such transactions, no advice was given to the customer, so there is virtually no redress for mis-selling.

The Prudential maintains that its salesmen were instructed not to give advice but to "give clients the information they needed whether to transfer out of their company schemes". David Linnell, of the Prudential, says that it was only from 1992, when the insurer had a new computer

system to analyse transfers, that it would consider advising people not to transfer out.

Chris Matthews, of Equitable Life, says: "Our stance is that a lot of cases were execution only. If a client says you definitely gave me advice, we would say you have to prove it."

He said the fact that a representative had provided a quotation for a personal pension plan and completed a fact find for the customer, simply showed that information had been given to the client. Any complainant would have to provide evidence, such as a letter of recommendation, to prove advice was given before they were compensated.

This approach is in direct conflict with the SIB guidelines, which state that if a firm wants to rely on a transaction being execution only to avoid paying compensation, it has to prove that no advice was given, rather than the complainant showing the reverse.

A tough line on the issue is being taken by the Personal Investment Authority, which regulates the insurance companies. A statement of policy, published this week, essentially backs SIB's approach, stating that "a review of past pensions business is necessary and desirable in the interests of investors" and that "the scope of the review should be as set out in SIB's guidance". This makes it almost certain that the PIA will be joined with SIB in the judicial review action.

Worryingly, there are signs that some insurers may flout these regulatory guidelines in their internal reviews of cases.

The issue is critical, partly because the documentation for most pension transactions in the late Eighties and early Nineties is poor. Two years ago, the regulators tightened up the rules. Any requirement for individuals to prove that they were given advice could reduce the compensation bill.

Many firms hope that the judicial review will lead to the SIB's guidelines being ruled unlawful, so forcing a shift in the compensation process in favour of the industry.

Garry Heath, head of the IFAA, says: "If the review goes ahead, a lot of independent advisers will go to the wall."



Tracey Glester claims she acted purely on the advice of the insurance salesmen

Nurse with a grievance

Tracey Glester, a nurse in the National Health Service, feels "really let down and disillusioned" after encounters with various pension sales representatives left her with "life insurance coming up to my eyes".

Mrs Glester opted out of the NHS scheme into a Prudential personal pension plan in 1990; transferred the £2,000 plus she had left in the NHS scheme into a Sun Life of Canada policy two years later; and then contracted out of the State pension scheme. Serps, into a Liverpool Victoria plan. Last year, she switched back into the NHS scheme on the Prudential's advice - but without the insurer admitting responsibility for any losses in her pension entitlement.

More than a year after she first complained to Prudential, it is unclear whether she will get compensation. The problems in resolving her complaint illustrate some of the wider difficulties besetting the pension transfers review.

Mrs Glester, who lives in Essex, is adamant

that the two Prudential representatives who visited her in 1990 advised her to opt out: "I acted purely on their advice. They said that personal pension plans were much better than my scheme. I didn't realise that I would lose my employer's contribution to my pension (about double the employee's contribution in this case), and I wasn't aware of other benefits such as index-linking."

Prudential denies this, saying that its records show that its representatives did point out the benefits of the health service scheme, and that Mrs Glester decided to opt out of that particular scheme because she was thinking of changing jobs and wanted the flexibility of a personal pension.

The case, like many others, is still deadlocked. Prudential had hoped to start deciding on cases next month, but this is now on hold, pending the outcome of the judicial review of the regulators' guidelines on compensation.

TO SUE OR NOT TO SUE?

UNDER existing guidelines, firms have up to two years to deal with complaints and until the end of next year to review some of the priority cases.

However, Ringrose Wharton, a firm of Bristol solicitors, says consumers could lose the right to take action for breach of contract if they wait more than six years from when they were advised to transfer, and lose a separate right to sue under the Financial Services Act if they wait more than three years after they become aware, or should have become aware, that the advice given broke the Act's rules.

Neil Stevens, of Ringrose

Wharton, says that legal action is usually worth considering only by people who have been advised to opt out of a company scheme, where the compensation due is greatest.

Of pension transfer firms contacted, only Pearl and Standard Life were prepared to confirm that they would not rely on the time limitations. Prudential said that "giving a blanket waiver for ever is something that we would not want to get into", while Allied Dunbar said it "would treat each case on its merits". TSB said that it was taking legal advice on the issue, and National & Provincial said it was

too early to talk about time limits while the judicial review was still pending.

An SIB spokesman cautioned against widespread legal action by policyholders, emphasising the cost and delay of doing so, and pointing out that anyone who was unhappy with the outcome of their complaint retained the right to go to the ombudsman.

SIB believes that the courts would be unlikely to uphold the six-year time limitation, provided the policyholder had complained to the firm already, while Greg Osbourne, of Crown Insurers, feels a time bar of 15 years is more likely.

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Societies must learn to play the game

Building societies must now be on their best behaviour. Granted almost their every wish by a munificent Treasury yesterday, they must start to learn what accountability to their members really means.

One useful first lesson would be to tackle obsolete and out-of-date accounts, closed to new customers but brimming over with money left by the original investors. The continued existence of these accounts robs savers of £800 million in interest every year. Each guilty society should now sweep each obsolete penny into new accounts. No excuses, please, that you will be thought high-handed.

Next, societies should begin to deal properly with members' requests for information. As our negative-equity report (page 29) reveals, borrowers seeking



ANNE ASHWORTH
Personal Finance
Editor

details of mortgage indemnity policies for which they paid the premiums meet either silence, or condescension. This attitude is not only inappropriate; it is also dangerous.

The secrecy encourages borrowers to believe that they may have some right to claim on these policies, probably a vain hope since the intention was to cover the lender's losses, not those of the homebuyer. But if this is the case, then why should the

societies continue to refuse to give access to the documents? Privately, the societies abhor the firms which promise borrowers that they can use these policies to flee the negative-equity trap. But the societies are themselves merely perpetuating the myth.

Legal & General now says that it will allow borrowers sight of its policies. If the societies will agree. Giving their consent would be the first step towards account-

ability. We await their response with interest.

The Government has commissioned consultants to go round Britain talking to divorcees.

The aim is, apparently, to collect information on how pensions are being apportioned on divorce. Or not, as is most often the case.

Ministers claim that all the data currently available is "anecdotal". This is another way of saying that the ex-wives who have already spoken out about their lack of pension rights are a tiny unrepresentative minority. Elsewhere couples have been, for years, dividing the pension spoils, without the need for clear cut legal guidelines.

This may be true of civilised marital splits among the moneyed classes, which now have actuaries in attendance. But

when middle-income couples part in early middle-age, the husband will seldom have enough spare cash to compensate his homemaker wife for the loss of his pension.

By conducting research, rather than amending the law, ministers are prevaricating. It seems they are plagued with visions of professional men marching on Whitehall and committing civil disobedience, rather than see their pensions reduced.

As we report below, pressure for reform is building from unusual quarters. We have had several calls this week from men who want to split their pensions with their ex-wives but who would like the law to lay down a procedure.

Meanwhile, the divorced wives survey will serve very well as source material for a gritty TV series.

Fight is on to provide for ex-wives

Pension assets must split, campaigners are arguing. Anne Ashworth reports

There is now increasing pressure on the Government finally to resolve the vexed issue of pension rights for divorced wives. All-party support is growing within the Commons and in the House of Lords for an amendment to the Pensions Bill, allowing pension assets to be split when couples separate, a solution supported by matrimonial lawyers.

If the Government remains unbending, campaigners in the Lords are ready to force a vote to the Pensions Bill when it reaches its report stage on March 14. One of their number, Baroness Hollis, Labour's social security spokeswoman has, in the past few days, received dozens of letters and calls in support of her stand for divorced wives.

The reforming zeal now spreading through Parliament has been spurred by reports in *The Times* on the plight of the wife who devotes her life to home and family, while her husband pursues his career and accumulates a pension, but who, when her marriage collapses, loses the automatic right to a share in this often considerable asset. Ill-equipped to find employment paying enough to live on and save for a pension, she can face an impoverished old age, dependent on the State.

The *Times* began to highlight the issue three years ago. On January 14 this year, we

detailed the groundswell of opinion gathering for a change in the law. On February 14, we detailed the case of Anne Brooks, the 56-year-old Berkshire housewife who has come to symbolise the deserted woman struggling to gain a share of her spouse's pension. Although the Court of Appeal ruled that she should receive a portion of his £500,000 pension, her estranged husband, Douglas Brooks, will be appealing against this decision in the House of Lords in April.

At present, ministers wish to make only limited changes to the rules, rather than establishing a new system for treatment of pensions on divorce.

Earlier this week, during the Lords committee stage of the Pensions Bill, Lord Mackay of Arden, the Social Security Minister, proposed that judges be required to "place greater emphasis on the need for pension rights when considering financial provision on divorce". The minister envisaged an amendment to the Matrimonial Causes Act, which already mentions the need to consider pensions.

However, the battalion of baronesses fighting for reform, led by Baroness Young, the former Conservative leader in the Lords, want nothing less than an amendment to the Pensions Bill, requiring



Divorce can deprive a wife of benefits under her former husband's pension

pensions to be divided on divorce.

Matrimonial lawyers, such as Claire Meltzer, of the London firm Collyer-Bristow, also take this view. She says: "The courts must have the power to split pensions for the sake of couples whose wealth is tied up in pensions and have few other assets of any value and little cash, such as senior civil servants."

"You might argue that the man should be required to give his ex-wife a greater share of the house to reflect the pension rights which she is losing. But this would impoverish him, something the courts would be unwilling to do."

Lady Hollis believes that there is some fear that the splitting of pensions would be extremely complicated. However, as she points out, whenever anyone leaves a pension scheme, they receive a transfer value of their benefits invested in the funds. The courts would use this figure. Geoffrey Bernstein, a leading actuary who advises in many complex pension cases resulting from divorce, confirms that there would be no hidden complexities in using this formula.

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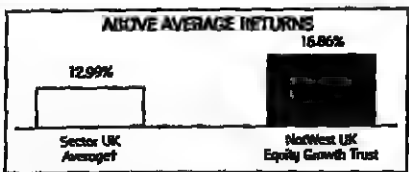
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Game for a short punt in run-up to Olympics?

Robert Miller looks at the prospects for the Australian stock market

Australia could not have wished for a better start to the millennium than to be hosting the Olympic Games. History shows that stock markets in countries that have staged the Games enjoy a good run before the opening ceremony as they get more and more attention in the build-up.

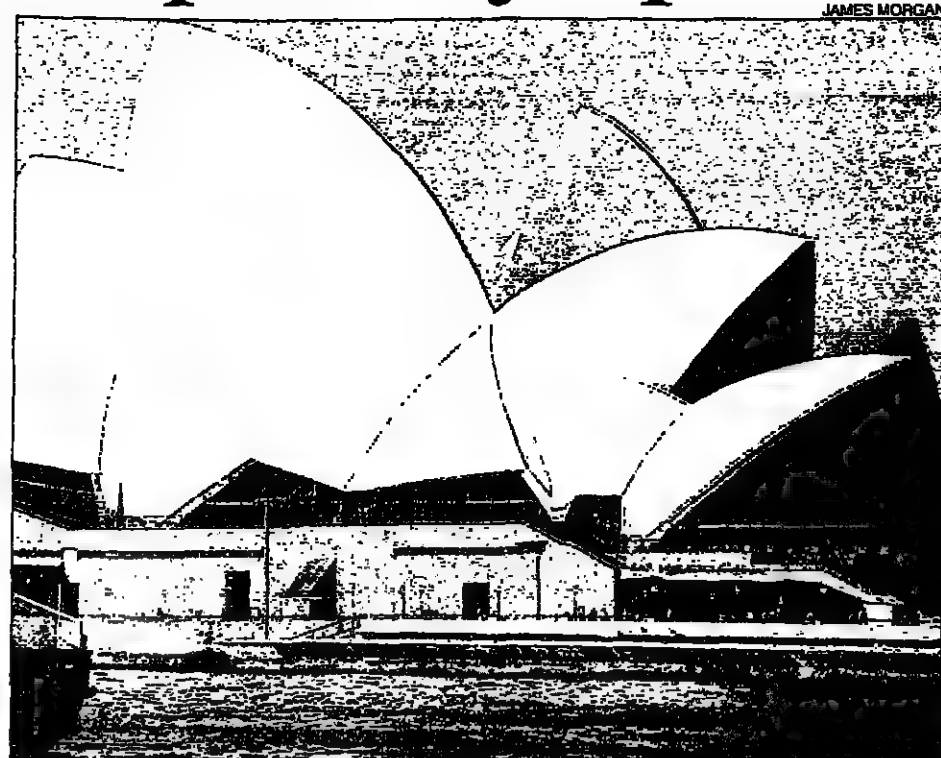
This lesson might provide a small crumb of comfort to investors who piled into the market after the announcement of Sydney's successful bid.

According to figures from Micropal, in the year to the beginning of this week, the four unit trusts listed under the Australasia sector are nursing average losses of nearly 40 per cent. The one investment trust, NM Smaller Australian Companies, has fared even worse. It is down by more than 35 per cent.

So can history repeat itself for the Australian market? Richard Phillipson, of Friends Provident's asset management arm which runs NM's unit trusts, including Australasian in 1993, says that Australia is caught in the same economic and interest rate cycle as America and Britain. As the US Federal Reserve has raised its interest rates, so too has Australia.

Mr Phillipson explains: "Short-term interest rates in Australia have risen quite sharply in recent months. The Government is keen to keep the lid on what have been fairly strong inflationary pressures. UK investors have also suffered from a currency loss so, all in all, they are more than 6 per cent down since the start of the year."

Australia is blessed with more mineral and natural resources than most. However, in the short term, that has proved to be a big disadvantage in stock market terms. According to Mr Phillipson, the Australian metals and



Investors piled into the market after the announcement that Sydney would stage the Games

minerals sector has fallen by 18 per cent in sterling terms since the start of the year, against a 6.5 per cent drop in the Australia all-share ordinary index. But that is the bad news.

On the bright side, Australia is located in a region of emerging and vibrant young economies. Mr Phillipson points out that Australia's GDP growth this year is estimated at about 4 per cent while its Asian neighbours and trading partners are expecting twice that growth.

John Kelly, a director of BZW Investment Management, adds that while the emerging economies of the Pacific region will undoubtedly need much of the raw materials produced by Australia, the real powerhouse of the future is China.

He says: "Within the next 30 years, China will be the world's biggest economy. Much of the raw material needed for its growth will come from Australia. But for years the natural resources sector in Australia has suffered from a lack of investment. That will change. The huge outflows of funds from the stock market, which we have seen in recent months, is

simply short-term profit-taking and we may even see more before the market starts to bottom out."

Mr Kelly argues that as the main supplier of materials to South East Asia, whether for buildings, roads, iron, steel, copper or zinc, Australia is benefiting from the growth in the region generally.

He also points out that ten years ago Australia was the fashionable market to be in. But it has since been overtaken by other investment success stories, such as the strong growth in emerging markets, particularly in Latin America, a popular theme of the past few years.

In terms of size, the Australian stock market shares second place in the Pacific region with Hong Kong, both trailing Japan. But Australia is dominated by its resources sector in a way that the other stock markets are not. This can make it very vulnerable to shifts in sentiment about world commodities in general.

The alternative to an Australian fund for an exposure to commodities is one of those listed under the commodity and energy sector. These have the advantage of providing a geographical spread and could be a hedge against

domestic influences in Australia. Nevertheless, in the run-up to the Olympics it might just be worth taking a small punt on the Australian market. But remember the last chapter in the history lesson. After the Olympic circus has packed up, stock markets tend to fall away again, as they did after the Barcelona Games.

Robert Miller was highly commended in the 1994 AUTIF/Barelays unit trust consumer journalist of the year awards

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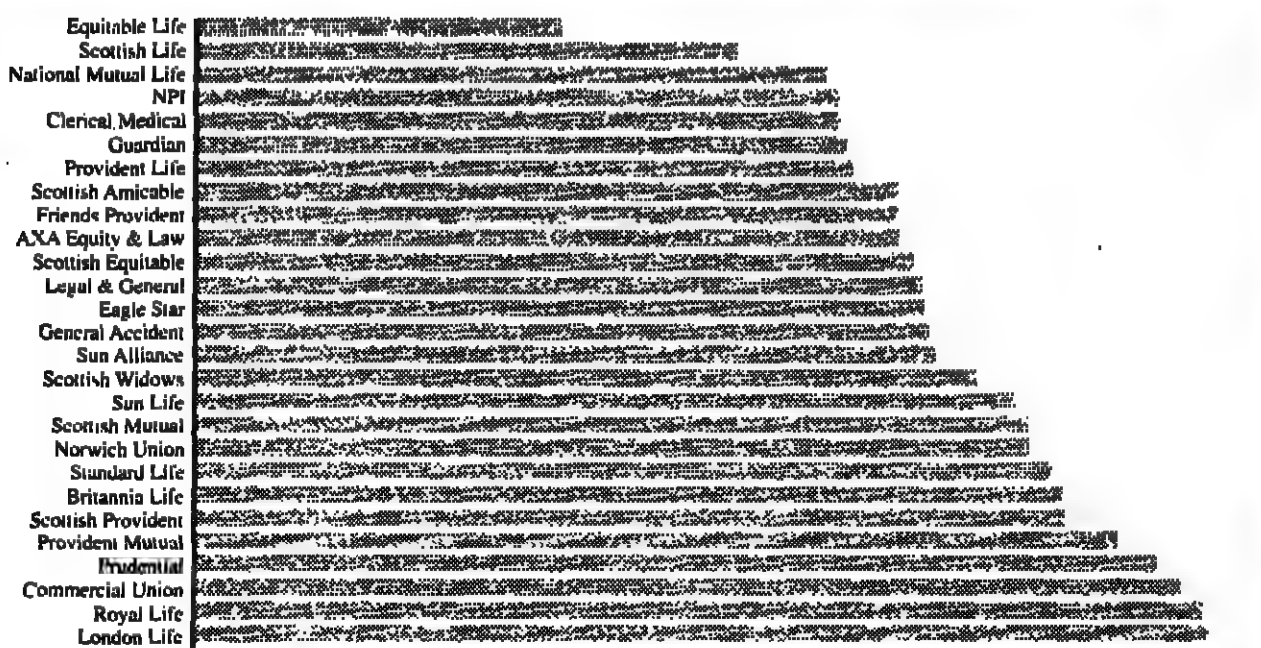
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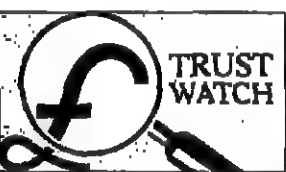
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Kleinwort Benson and Mercury European Privatisation trusts between them attracted more than £1 billion. To date neither has sparked.

On the other hand, investors in 3i, formerly Investors in Industry, which floated last summer to become the only investment trust in the FT-SE 100 index of top 100 companies, have fared much better.

According to Robin Angus, a director of NatWest Securities and one of the most respected investment trust analysts, 3i is the best performing company in the index since its launch. Mr Angus adds, however, that in a sense 3i was very much a one-off.

In general, he says: "You cannot invest in a new trust for a quick killing. The great majority of new launches these days are specialist trusts. You invest in them either because you want to or need to because they are fulfilling a need in your portfolio. Many investors have some money in emerging markets which have performed horribly over the past few months. But those investments are there to do a job over the long term."

Even in pure statistical terms, investment trusts have to be considered for inclusion in a well-diversified portfolio. For example, outside the top 100 companies, investment trusts account for nearly 30 per cent of the FT-SE Mid-250 index.

However, picking the right trust is not always easy, as NatWest Securities acknowledged in its annual review of the sector published this week. It says that with more than 100 investment trust companies being launched in the past five years alone, the time has come "for a major rethink of the way in which we research the sector". But it concludes that investment trusts have made great strides in attracting new investors.

ROBERT MILLER

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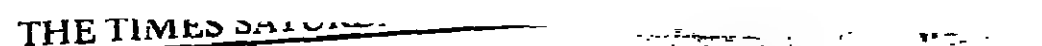
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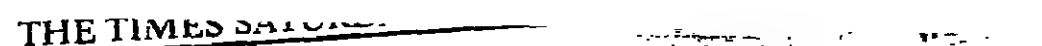
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HUGH ROUTLEDGE

you've got a case then you've got to go for it."

Champions to test Everton's hopes of survival



Ince complete

BY PETER BALL

GOODISON Park, where Manchester United are to be found visiting Everton, and Ewood Park are the venues for today's stage of the two-horse FA Carling Premiership race. They are also under the spotlight in the bigger competition to avoid relegation.

Everton are still in the thick of things at the bottom of the Premiership and Norwich, Blackburn's visitors, if not in immediate danger, are, on recent form, in some peril of being drawn into the fray. Everton's results of late have been encouraging and, against Norwich in the FA Cup last Saturday, they also played some good football. However, after their disas-

trous start to the season, they have had to run full pelt to draw level in the race to survive.

Their defeat at Leeds United on Wednesday leaves them with still some way to go before safety is assured. To compound matters, the game deprived them of Paul Rideout for a minimum of four weeks, possibly six, a sad blow with the striker in fine form, scoring 14 goals in 22 games. Graham Stuart will replace him, a hamstring injury permitting.

With United in their present mood, victory is a tall order for Everton, as Royle admitted: "United are a terrific side, they were awesome against Leeds. I think they are the best side of modern times. They have

speed, power and aggression. They have tremendous strength in all departments and they are capable of doing the double double.

"Keane and Ince are great examples of what I mean by 'dogs of war'. They are there for you on a dark, dark night in January, not just in the sunshine of August. Ince is probably the most complete footballer in Britain.

"Yet, having said all that, nobody is perfect and they won't go through the rest of the season unbeaten. I remember at Oldham we beat them when they were on the run to the championship two years ago and this Everton side is better equipped to do that than Oldham were."

If United do lose, it will be

an important three points for Everton — and almost equally so for Blackburn, who could then take their lead back up to five points by beating Norwich. Blackburn may have Stuart Ripley back, Ripley coming on as substitute on Wednesday without further repercussions on his injured ankle. Two years ago, Norwich lost 7-1 at Blackburn; on the form of the last eight days, a similar scoreline would come as no surprise.

Norwich are slipping dangerously, but they still have some margin for error with Coventry, Chelsea, Manchester City and Southampton, who have drawn nine of their last 11 matches — including seven in a row — also perilously placed above the

relegation zone. City at last halted their run of four points from ten games by beating Ipswich, which took them up to twelfth, but a home defeat by Leeds today could leave the noose still hovering over Maine Road once again.

With Rösler and Beagrie suspended and Filtrout injured, Horton has to make do and mend. Leeds have Palmer and Deane available again after suspension, but with Yeboah announcing his presence with the winning goal on Wednesday, Deane may not regain his place.

Coventry meet Leicester and Southampton go to Ipswich, matches they need to win to keep clear of the bottom four. Leicester's recovery from 4-1 down at Villa Park on Wed-

nesday spoke volumes for their spirit.

Ipswich, who went bottom in midweek, are, if anything, in even worse shape, although the return of Ian Marshall for his first game since October to form a new striking partnership with Alex Mathie, yesterday's £500,000 signing from Newcastle, will provide a ray of optimism.

Chelsea go to West Ham United for one of the three London derbies. Crystal Palace against Arsenal will be a centre of attention. After the win over Forest in midweek, Stewart Houston will be eager to start a run going to press his claims as George Graham's permanent replacement. He has named an unchanged team.

Thomson delivers winning ripostes in style

BY GORDON ALLAN

ANDY THOMSON, the holder, reached the final of the Churchill Insurance world indoor bowls singles championship by defeating Tony Allcock 5-7, 7-6, 6-7, 7-5, 7-4 in an absorbing four-hour match of high quality, at the Preston Guild Hall yesterday.

Allcock was the champion in 1986 and 1987 and he was fired up to try to beat Thomson, who has a good record against him in the singles. Thomson was a set down twice, but he is a steady character and his game was in excellent order, apart from two or three drives that flew past their target.

The crucial point was that Thomson bowled better lead bowls throughout, frequently forcing Allcock into conversion shots. He played these brilliantly at times, but the resultant pressure must have affected him.

The match lasted 43 ends — a record in this event, beating the 41 played by Ian Schuback in his defeat of David Holt in 1992. Both the opening sets went to ten ends, with Allcock saving a set life four times in the second.

Allcock took the lead again after a tight third set. Thomson won the fourth with a close double on the last end. In the deciding, a drive went wrong for Allcock, presenting Thomson with three shots for a 6-2 advantage. Allcock twice saved a match life before Thomson could be sure of his place in the final.

"That was my best form of this championship," Thomson said. "I've had another look at my delivery and it's paid off."

Allcock, in genial mood despite his defeat, said: "I'm playing my best bowls of the season after a good rest. All I can say is that, whoever wins, I hope that the final is as good as our match today."

Allcock played two of the finest shots of the championship at the climax of his quarter-final, against Hugh Duff on Thursday. Duff, after losing the first two sets, squared the match and had a match tie at 6-5 in the fifth, with one bowl just in front of the jack and another just behind — an almost ideal position. Almost but not quite.

Allcock responded to the challenge by drawing, on the back hand, two magnificent bowls inside those of Duff, who then missed with a final despairing drive.

"What can I say?" Duff said. "Tony played two wonderful shots. I couldn't believe it."

Allcock, as well he might, said that he could not recall playing two better bowls. "Hugh could hardly have played better," he said. "I'm not surprised if he feels gutted."

Results, page 43

Scotland forward emerges from the shadows to sparkle in Goodison Park revival

Rough edge conceals diamond in Ferguson

BY PETER BALL

Manchester United have lived with the glories and excesses of Eric Cantona, the French enfant terrible, for two years. Today, they meet the Scottish version for the first time. Duncan Ferguson offers a threat to their ambitions at Goodison Park this afternoon.

The similarities between the Frenchman and the Scot are striking. Yesterday, with rare symmetry, both were due before the beaks, Cantona meeting the Football Association, Ferguson, 23, to make the acquaintance of Merseyside magistrates for the first time, having been stopped, and later charged with drink-driving, the night before his first Merseyside derby in October.

That would appear to place him squarely in the grand, if declining, tradition of Scottish footballers who believe that football is a good excuse for a party. But, also in that tradition, the party did not interfere with his contribution on the field, Ferguson playing a key role as Everton signalled the beginning of their revival under Joe Royle by beating Liverpool.

Even if yesterday was his first scheduled appearance before the bench in Liverpool (he was not required to attend and the case was adjourned until March 17), his record in Scotland makes Cantona look quiet, even meek, by comparison. The big Scot has a charge of assault facing him in May for allegedly head-butting John McStay, of Raith Rovers.

A past record of confrontations from his early days at Dundee United does not suggest a hapless victim. There is little doubt, however, that his size — 6ft 4in — and his reputation, made him a target for would-be hard men.

"The environment didn't help him," Walter Smith, the Rangers manager who bought and sold him for £4 million, said. "I'm not saying he was innocent but, especially at Rangers, anything he did was always big news."

"Players get provoked in Glasgow more than in England, particularly someone as big as him," Craig Brown, the Scotland manager, who brought Ferguson back into the squad for the game in Greece in December, said. "And sometimes it needs a special breed to walk away from it."

Perhaps Smith and Brown were right. So far there has been little untoward since he came south of the border, apart from the court hearing and his sending-off at Highbury after a spat with John Jensen.

Joe Royle, the Everton manager, said at the time of the sending-off: "I don't have any trouble with his temperament — just with his maturity." Indeed, Royle insists that his most expensive signing has been "a pussy-cat" at

'In reality he is just a big daft lad with no real malice in him'

Goodison Park. "He is very amiable, very popular in the dressing-room."

Royle had no hesitation in paying £4 million to Rangers for his centre forward, along with the propensity for trouble off the pitch, he is an important influence on it. Surprisingly with his reputation, he is not in the Joe Jordan or Andy Gray mould of rumbustious leaders.

"I wouldn't describe him as lazy, but he is economical with his running," Brown said. "He's not been a prolific scorer, but he creates goals, if you are an opponent you cannot ignore him and he causes havoc in the penalty area. Defenders attending to him creates more room for Rideout [Paul, the Everton forward]."

Rideout, who was in the richest form of his career, with

14 goals from 22 games until his injury at Leeds United on Wednesday, is the first to admit Ferguson's part in his success since his arrival on loan from Rangers. But when Royle replaced Mike Walker his first impressions were not favourable.

"From what I'd seen of him in training I wasn't impressed," Royle said. "He looked disinterested, lazy, indifferent to the game. But then the first game, against Liverpool, and he was transformed, a passionate, talented player who made a major contribution to us winning."

"There is a group of outstanding strikers around at the moment, but I think Ferguson has the potential to be the best of the lot. He is good in the air, but he has excellent touch and pace that people don't realise."

Such praise and expectation have accompanied Ferguson since he emerged as a teenager at Dundee United. The move to Rangers should have been the start of a great career, but injuries — to him and to his natural forward partner, Ally McCoist — interrupted his progress, and his difficulties off the field made a move desirable.

For Scotland, too, he is longer on promise than on performance so far. There was a dazzling 45-minute spell against Germany, including an overhead kick, replayed incessantly on television, that Brown testified "would have been the goal of the decade for Scotland". But the German goalkeeper matched it with an arcing save, and Ferguson's only international goal at any level was in an under-21 match against Malta.

"The trouble with Duncan is that everything is in extremes," one Scottish colleague said. "He's either seen as a deplorable rascal or the great white hope of Scottish football. In reality he's a big daft lad, with no real malice in him, who has great potential."



Ferguson, whose displays have justified the faith of Royle, the Everton manager, since his £4 million move from Rangers

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

BY ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

The hand below won the Journalist's Prize for the best declarer play at the Malta International Bridge Festival last week.

Dealer West North-South game. Match pointed pairs

♠ QJ72
♥ AK753
♦ AK
♣ Q6

♠ AK43
♥ A1084
♦ Q752
♣ 6

♠ 10985
♥ A2
♦ 985
♣ 10733

♠ 86
♥ 65
♦ A1064
♣ AKJ864

Contract: 3NT by South. Lead: two of diamonds

South (James Forder) played in 3NT after North had opened One Heart. After winning the first diamond the declarer played the king of hearts from dummy, to set up his ninth trick. East won and returned the nine of diamonds. After taking the diamond the declarer played off six rounds of clubs.

West had the nightmare hand — guards in all the other suits. His first four discards were easy: two spades, a heart and a diamond, coming down to ♠AK♥J10♦Q♣—.

On the fifth club South threw a spade. The sixth round of clubs now turned the screw on West. Interpreting East's failure to discard his small diamond on the fifth club as evidence that East held the jack of diamonds, West discarded the queen of diamonds.

The declarer was now able

to cash the jack and ten of diamonds; on the last diamond West was down to three cards, ♠A♥J10; dummy had ♠Q♥K♣. Whatever West discarded allowed dummy to score the last two tricks. The declarer made 12 tricks in all.

The ending was a so-called "repeating squeeze", and in truth developed more or less automatically. If West had known the declarer had the jack of diamonds, it would have been better for him to discard a spade honour on the sixth club. In that case the squeeze would have only been worth one trick. The problem with letting the queen of diamonds go was that it left the declarer on play to continue the squeeze. It is a well-known principle of defence against squeeze play — unguard suits held over you in preference to suits held under you.

KEENE on CHESS

BY RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Veteran's victory

Viktor Korchnoi, the 63-year-old veteran of the Pan Pacific tournament in San Francisco, scored a dazzling victory against the up-and-coming American master Maurice Ashley.

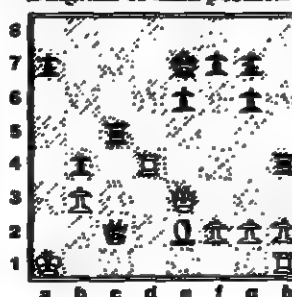
Selecting a somewhat unusual variation of the Caro-Kann Defence, Korchnoi conducted the late opening in original fashion, developing one rook laterally and avoiding castling. Korchnoi's final sacrificial onslaught left White facing inevitable checkmate.

White: Maurice Ashley
Black: Viktor Korchnoi
Pan Pacific, San Francisco, February 1995

Caro-Kann defence

1 ♠4 c5
2 ♠4 d5
3 ♠d2 dxe4
4 ♠e4 Bf5
5 ♠g3 Bg6
6 ♠f3 Nf6
7 ♠e5 Nd7
8 ♠g6 h6
9 ♠c3 c6
10 ♠e3 c5
11 ♠e5 Bc5
12 ♠c3 Bc5
13 ♠c5 Ne5
14 ♠b5+ Rf4
15 ♠0-0 Rf4
16 ♠e2 Rf8
17 ♠b1 b5
18 ♠c3 b4
19 ♠d2 Ne4
20 ♠e4 Qc2+
21 ♠e1 Qc2+
22 ♠f3 Nc3+
23 ♠b3 Nc3+
24 ♠a3 Rc3
White resigns

Diagram of final position



Korchnoi's move 22 ... Nd2 was brilliant. If White plays 23 Rxd2 then 23 ... Qc1+ 24 Rxc1 Rxc1 is checkmate. Alternatively 22 ... Nd2 23 Qxd2 Rxd4 24 Qd4 Qc1+ again leads to checkmate.

Gulko leads

After three rounds in San Francisco, the American Grandmaster Boris Gulko leads with 2.5 points. Britain's John Nunn shares second with Viktor Korchnoi on 2.

Kosten wins

The English Grandmaster Tony Kosten has shared first prize in the blitz chess tournament in Aubervilliers, France. Half a point behind was the chess computer Novag W Chess.

Sadler success

Grandmaster Matthew Sadler, from Chatham, Kent, has won outright first prize in the Grand Prix de Cannes with 7 points out of 9.

Winning Move. Weekend, page 21

Anglers in line for fresh challenge

In the second of two articles, Brian Clarke examines the impact of some severe flooding this winter on the coming fishing season

It may seem to be a trivialising disaster to discuss the effects of the recent floods on angling, but even those fishermen who were themselves affected will soon have to give the matter some thought. The impact of this winter on rivers is likely to have been profound.

Life for the smaller creatures under water when a river rages in flood can be imagined and the losses among insect colonies must be appalling. Fish, however, are well able to look after themselves. They shelter behind stones and congregate in bays and side into the mouths and lower reaches of side streams. When the water is over the banks, it is not uncommon for coarse fishermen to make hay of a different kind where normally only grass is to be found.

So it is not the well-being of fish that is a common concern for the angler: it is their whereabouts once the water has subsided. Many places that produced good bags last year may this year produce nothing. A shady corner which last year harboured a corker may this year hold only minnows. Reaches which before the floods held nothing may now be teeming.

The reason is that the needs of fish remain the same after a flood as before it and that a flood, if it changes the topography of a river bed, changes the places in which those fishy needs can be met. The needs of specific fish vary from species to species but the essential requirements remain constant. They are the universal needs of everything that lives: Food, security and

the maximum degree of convenience and comfort that the first two will allow.

Before a flood, a territorial fish like a trout will have been living in a place which offered these features in the most desirable combination that the fish could defend. After a flood it will return to its former life if it has been unchanged or seek out an alternative if it has been destroyed or made less attractive. If the lie has been significantly improved by the action of the flood water, the fish may find itself ousted by a bigger specimen than itself.

There are several character-

istics of a trout lie in a river and high water can affect them all. Knowing what these are is the key to understanding how fish populations in a given reach may have been redistributed.

For example, when a river floods, the currents which boil into the outside of a bend can cause the bank there to collapse. What may have been a wonderful lie for a trout — a steep bank on the outside of a bend is a favourite because the current creates deep water there and carries much food — may be spoiled or made even better.

Gravel banks are often bodily shifted in heavy waters. If they have been levelled, fish that were once found in that area will have been dispersed; if they are created or enlarged so that currents sweep around them and channel flow into thin, tight lines on either side, fish

may be found that were not present before.

Familiar in-stream furniture, like sunken logs, may be swept away in high water but new logs or undercut trees may be added, albeit in different places. The value of such obstructions to fish and to fishermen will depend on where they are.

If a log has been beached in shallow water, its value may be negligible. If it has fallen into a moderate current that formerly sustained a fish or two, then more fish are likely to gather because of the cover it provides and the insect life that will be generated around it. If an obstruction is deposited in fast water, it is likely to attract fish on its upstream edge because the water and the food it carries will have been abruptly slowed; and again, fish will be found where the current sweeps around the sides to create narrow, food-rich eddies.

All manner of fish love weeds because of the food and security they provide, but weeds are vulnerable to floods because each type depends in part on different water speeds for its existence. Slow-water weeds are often swept away and sometimes cannot grow again because the silt over which their root systems depended, has gone.

And so, on many waters this year, fish are not going to be where the angler last found them and tracking them down will be the first of the challenges. Understanding each fish's needs and the kinds of places that offer them, is going to be the key. Catching the fish, of course, is quite another matter.

Ireland must English conte

Suspension is extended as errant Frenchman warned over future conduct

Cantona put on probation by FA

By ROB HUGHES
FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

ERIC CANTONA will reappear on the playing fields of England in the autumn. He has been granted that licence, that opportunity to atone for his misdemeanours at Selhurst Park last month, by the disciplinary committee of the Football Association.

When they met the errant Manchester United footballer at a country hotel in St Albans yesterday, we are told by his lawyer that he showed contrition, regret and made a genuine apology for his two-footed "kung fu" kick at an abusive Crystal Palace supporter. But before the assembled members of the world's media, he sat as silent and unmoved as the sphinx. He had nothing to say, we found him as unfathomable in facial expression as his skills and his moods have proved unfathomable at play.

Some in the room with him wanted him drummed out of the game for life. But they, who sensed blood, were disappointed when the FA, after three hours of deliberation, merely added punishments that were a gesture, a flexing of authority's muscle.

The committee of three — Geoff Thompson, JP, of Sheffield, Ian Stott, chairman of Oldham Athletic, and Gordon McKeag, president of the Football League — extended the suspension which Manchester United had preempted on their star, taking it from the end of this season to the end of September. They also added a fine of £10,000 to the fine of two weeks' wages that the club had imposed (presumed to be £20,000), asked FIFA, the governing body of world football, to make the ban worldwide and warned Cantona as to his future conduct.

In other words, he is on probation for his footballing career. That is as it should be. I personally have no time, no hunger, for an authoritative reaction that would deprive Cantona of the basic right, part and parcel of the principle on which we live our daily lives, that if we make a career error, it is incumbent on us to try to redeem that in the public eye.

Weak? Possibly so, but we live in a football atmosphere that condones a monster of the professional footballing world like Vinnie Jones, and yet seeks to pillory beyond reason a player of mercurial, sometimes intolerable, extremes such as Cantona.

He, at least, has the other side to his character that lifts the game with his expression, his inspiration, his beauty in



Cantona looks on impassively after hearing the punishment meted out by an FA disciplinary committee at St Albans yesterday. Photograph: Simon Walker

the sporting sense. If ever he were to repeat his assault on a spectator, he knows that the curtain would fall. He gave, apparently, an understated, understaking yesterday, that it will never happen again.

When the disciplinary committee's work was done, when Cantona faced the press, he was flanked not only by the chief executive of the FA, not only by his indulgent manager at Manchester United, but also by two lawyers.

It seemed quite incredible that here was a human being, lauded above the status of one who possesses only two legs, attracting all the glamour and the hype of a Hollywood star.

When the black limousine, driven by Ned Kelly, Manchester United's chief security officer, arrived, a locust

of photographers swarmed towards it. Alex Ferguson, the United manager, got out and held the rear door open for Cantona; and he, shoulders squared back as ever, the stride arrogant, the head aloft, simply ignored them.

When he emerged into the interview room, he was to sit in front of a blue backdrop, the crest of the three rampant lions of England perched on his right shoulder. The dark eyes of Cantona surveyed the media circus in front of him; occasionally those eyes looked down. But the arms remained folded, there was never a gesture nor a hint of what was going through the mind.

His time may come in a court of law. For the police have properly summonsed him for common assault, and

MODERN RECORD PUNISHMENTS

18 MONTHS: Billy McIlfatry, of Stenhousemuir, suspended for failing to appear at a disciplinary hearing after being sent off in 1993. He was also fined £200.
6 MONTHS: Eric Cantona, of Manchester United, suspended for attacking a spectator after being sent off at Crystal Palace in January 1995. Fined £10,000.
12 MATCHES: Duncan Ferguson, of Rangers, suspended after violent conduct in 1994. The ban has been lifted.
9 MATCHES: Paul Doolan, of Arsenal, suspended after a punch broke Glenn Cook's jaw in 1989. He was also fined £5,000.
9 MATCHES: Steve Watson, of Leicester City, suspended for his poor disciplinary record in 1987.
9 MATCHES: Frank Sinclair, of Chelsea, suspended after a clash of heads with a referee while on loan to West Bromwich Albion in 1982 and fined £500.
220,000: Vinnie Jones, of Wrexham, fined for producing a video extorting four players in 1992. He was also given a suspended six-month ban.

in a courtroom that cannot threaten his livelihood, he may deign to speak for himself.

Meanwhile, his silence is neither golden nor total. There is much talk of how much this suspension will cost him: in fines, so far, it is £30,000. Since Manchester United will

quality for any end-of-season bonus should United win the League and/or FA Cup, but in any case finance is not Eric Cantona's sole god.

Even if it were, we are naive to think that he is incapable, during enforced athletic idleness, of recouping his losses. Nike, the American sports outfitter, which had before the rumour used an advertisement which glorified the rebellious side of Cantona, waited scarcely two days after the Selhurst Park incident to make another one.

In that soon-to-be-released French television commercial, Cantona says: "Why should I let myself be insulted just because I'm on the playing field?" The commercial centres on issues of racism, violence, and hate in the

stadiums. Nothing could excuse his hot-headed response at Selhurst Park, but Graham Kelly, the FA chief executive, pointedly stated yesterday: "We are concerned about the increasing level of abuse which footballers seem to have to suffer. We don't think it is acceptable, we don't think it is part of the game, and we hope to talk to leading politicians about an initiative to deal with it."

And by the time Cantona returns, one hopes there is an initiative from within the game, led by the Professional Footballers' Association, to prevent the contrived cheating which all too evidently has been used to rile Cantona, and will, under the present malign system, be used again.

Anxious Clark wants to leave Newcastle

By PETER BALL

THE changes at Newcastle United are gathering pace. Yesterday, Alex Mathie, the Scottish forward, joined Ipswich Town and Les Clark, their England Under-21 midfielder, is poised to follow Andy Cole out of St James' Park after turning down the offer of a new, two-year contract.

Once regarded as the outstanding member of a talented group of young players, Clark, Newcastle's player of the year in their promotion season, lost his place in the side last season, a foot injury keeping him out until October last year. Since his recovery, he has been unable to command a regular place in the side and he wanted assurances of a place before discussing a new contract.

"It will be a big wrench to leave the club," Clark said, "but it has become increasingly difficult to accept that I have to fight for a place on the bench, never mind in the team."

"I can understand his reasons," Keegan said. "If I was in his situation, I probably would have reacted the same way. His problem is that he is up against Peter Beardsley and Robert Lee, two England men."

If Clark does go, Newcastle will want more than £2 million. With £6 million from the Cole transfer, and the sale of Alex Mathie to Ipswich bringing in £500,000 yesterday, Keegan is building up a ready reserve of cash for an entry into the transfer market.

Last night, he went to watch Christophe Dabry, the Bordeaux striker, against Sochaux, and tomorrow he travels to Spain to survey the talent there. Nevertheless, he insisted that the money is not burning a hole in his pocket.

"I'm window shopping," he said. "I'm not going to be like a pool winner and buy the first thing I see."

Burnley, who are next to bottom in the Endcliffe Insurance League first division after seven successive defeats, signed Steve Thompson, the Leicester City and former Bolton midfielder player, and the striker, Kurt Nogan, from Brighton for a total of £500,000 yesterday. Nottingham County, the only team below Burnley in the first division, were also active, signing Kevin Russell from Bourne for £50,000.

Rough diamond, page 43
Everton's test, page 43

Pakistan pair end their Test careers

By SIMON WILDE

PAKISTAN'S cricket tour of southern Africa was thrown into further confusion yesterday when two of the party's 16 members announced that they had retired from the international game.

Rashid Latif, vice-captain and first-choice wicketkeeper, is 26. Basil Ali, a talented middle-order batsman, 24. They are of an age at which only swimmers and tennis players usually consider new careers.

The pair broke the news after the rest of the party had returned to Harare from a trip to Victoria Falls. Intikhab Alam, the Pakistan manager, said that the announcement had come as a surprise. "It is very unfortunate," he added, "but they say they are not enjoying international cricket any more."

The announcements, with only two one-day fixtures and five days of the tour remaining, may have been a surprise to Intikhab but it was not unexpected by others.

Rashid is believed to have been only narrowly dissuaded from leaving the tour earlier on and is known to have rowed with his captain, Salim Malik, over tactics during the Mandela Trophy last month.

Reasons for Rashid's retirement, however, are not confined to "not enjoying international cricket". Also relevant is that Pakistan's players — notably Salim — are believed to be at the centre of allegations being investigated by the Pakistan Cricket

Board of attempted match-rigging.

Rashid has, according to Sarfraz Nawaz, the former Test fast bowler, accused nine of his colleagues of accepting bribes.

Salim vigorously denies accepting or offering bribes and one member of the tour party, who preferred to remain anonymous yesterday, said that Rashid and Basil would have been "sacked" on returning home in any case, along with three others in the team. Aamir Sobani, the opening batsman, was reported as saying last week: "If I wasn't bound by a code of conduct, I could name so many players in the present national team who have been bribed to lose matches. It's getting so bad that it's getting all the guys who don't do it a bad name." He later denied making the remarks.

If there is opportunism at work in some of the actions and words of Pakistan players — Rashid and Basil faxed their decisions not only to the Pakistan board but also to a domestic news agency — it would hardly be surprising. Salim got his first chance in Test cricket in 1982 during a revolt against Javed Miandad's leadership and inherited the captaincy early last year after another against Wasim Akram's.

If Rashid thinks he can gain from Salim's troubles, he might well be right.

Umpire objects, page 42

Benn eager for good 'tear-up'

Srikumar Sen feels the quick-fire
McClellan has the credentials to
secure an explosive win over Benn



NIGEL BENN is on a mission impossible: defending his World Boxing Council super-middleweight title against Gerald McClellan at the London Arena tonight — if the experts are to be believed. Being 31, battle weary and having a chin that has often looked fragile, they believe Benn will be stopped by McClellan inside six rounds.

McClellan has knocked out 29 of his 33 opponents; 31 of those wins were inside three rounds, 20 coming in the first. Only four bouts have gone the distance (eight rounds) and of those, he has lost two early in his career.

McClellan said: "If this guy beats me, look what I'm going to lose. My kids can't get everything they want. So, to me, this guy is taking food off my kids' table. I can't describe how hungry I am going into a fight, so determined."

To reinforce this, the American, who owns seven pit-bulls, likens himself in savagery to his dogs. "Pit-bulls hate me in the ring with another fighter, is like a pit-bull seeing another animal. When I'm in the ring I have so much hate for the other guy so much desire to knock this guy unconscious. It's a great feeling for me to knock a man unconscious and watch them fall. I enjoy the feeling better than sex."

No wonder the bookmakers have made McClellan 5-2 on and in the round-by-round betting, while McClellan is between 7-1 and 10-1 to finish off Benn in the first four rounds, Benn is 40-1 to do the same to McClellan. In later rounds McClellan is 20-1, Benn 50-1.

Mickey Duff, the promoter

has put £100 on each of the first five rounds at 10-1 a round for McClellan to win and it is rumoured that Frank Warren, another London promoter, has bet £4,000 that Benn will fall in four rounds. It looks so simple to cash in on McClellan wrapping it up in six rounds. But then nothing was more simple than Mike Tyson beating James "Buster" Douglas.

Benn, who weighed in on the 1st limit, 31b heavier than McClellan, rightly points out there are some doubts about the kind of opposition McClellan has been seeing off. None of McClellan's middleweight championship opponents was in good enough shape to cause him serious

trouble, though Julian Jackson did go five rounds. Flooring McClellan first and then being put down himself. The second encounter with Jackson lasted one round. Jackson cannot see well. Because of an eye operation, he is not allowed to box in Britain.

John Mugabi, whom McClellan beat to win the World Boxing Organisation title, was shot to pieces. It needed just one blow in the first round to knock the Ugandan out. Gilbert Baptiste was an old man, and Jeffery Bell was no more than a journeyman. Most of McClellan's pre-championship contests were against little-known light-middleweights.

Further, the American is

thought not to be the best of trainers. At the Kronk Gym in Detroit, his attitude to training did not please Emanuel Steward.

However, there is little doubt that he is a boxer of the highest class. Steward, who no longer has McClellan, said he has "more natural talent than anyone I've ever worked with". McClellan has the rare gift of being able to box as well as he can punch.

All of which makes it very difficult for Benn to know which strategy to follow. Go in and try to bomb the challenger out and risk getting caught himself, or box, hoping to take McClellan past the eighth round for the first time in his career.

The feeling is that Benn will do what he does best: go in straight away for an explosive opening. He is likely to come off worse. Benn's camp says he will box: "Take him to school, then knock him out late in the fight."

A quick ending in McClellan's favour seems the most likely outcome, but Benn has been unaffected by solid blows from punchers such as Chris Eubank, so one should not be surprised if Benn does not collapse in a heap as a result of a punch-up.

Benn had been bedevilled with legal and training problems: he parted company with his former trainer, Jimmy Tibbs, and found himself in court over an action brought by his first trainer, Brian Lynch. But Benn says the distractions have not affected his concentration and is looking forward to a "tear-up".



Benn, left, set to take on McClellan, knockout specialist

People's champion, page 42

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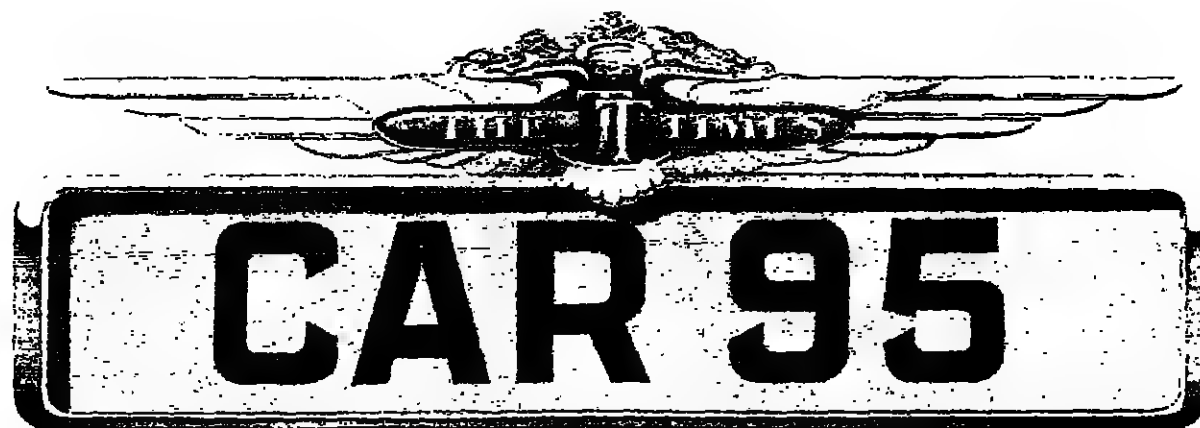
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Driving safely with the strong silent type
Page 12



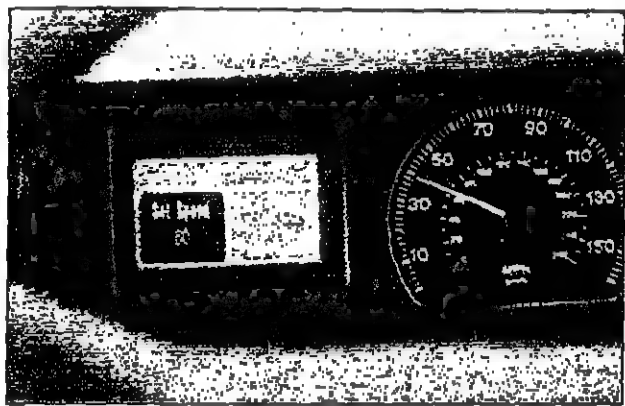
Why lucky chauffeurs have fat dogs and good wives
Page 5



SATURDAY FEBRUARY 25 1995

The experimental Jaguar that drives itself is not the first of its kind. Kevin Eason reveals . . .

How we crashed out of the fast lane



The way forward: an on-board car computer . . .



... that forewarns of what lies on the road ahead



A clearer picture: night-sight and vision enhancement systems, similar to those used by RAF fighter pilots in the Gulf War, highlight potential hazards

Many of the motoring miracles of tomorrow were pioneered by British scientists three decades ago

The technology is pure Dan Dare: cars that steer and brake for themselves, eliminating the catastrophic errors of human drivers that cost lives every day on Britain's roads. Car makers say that even their most humble runabouts could be using this life-saving equipment within five years.

Yet it might have been with us now, had government scientists been allowed to continue pioneering experiments that could have made Britain a world leader in the technology of safe driving.

David Hunt, the minister for science, announced this week that £100 million is to be put into research to make Britain a leader in "high technology road vehicle manufacturing" by the year 2015. The research is vital because the market for computer-guided controls could be worth £3 billion a year and employ 130,000 workers within a decade.

The technology will allow drivers to "see" in the dark, using night sights like those used on RAF fighters, while their cars will almost "think" for themselves, braking and steering and keeping a safe distance from other vehicles while guided to their destinations by satellites.

It is the Brave New World of motoring. But the irony of the announcement will not be lost on the generation of scientists who, 30 years ago, designed and fitted cars with the technology now being hailed as vital in the drive to the future. They were working at the

government's own Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) and calculated that their inventions would allow a 50 per cent increase in traffic on motorways and main roads. At the same time they would cut accidents by 40 per cent, mainly by eradicating driver error, which is responsible for about seven in ten accidents. If TRL's estimates were applied to today's roads, 800 lives might be saved every year.

Even the investment in equipment would have been repaid by the end of the century, the scientists claimed. But we never had the chance to find out whether Britain could have become a high-technology motoring Utopia.

Why the experiments ended, nobody seems to know; but the likely reason is that governments of the 1970s were more consumed with panic over the economy than inspired by cars bristling with gadgets, no matter how worthwhile. And even if it worked, where would the money have come from to put the technology into operation?

The fact that car makers today are perfecting equipment long ago dreamed up by the TRL team underlines just how remarkable their research was.

When the TRL's Crowthorne laboratory in Berkshire was built in 1960, Britain was the third biggest car producer in the world behind only the United States and Germany. We made models envied and copied in other nations and confidently exported around the world. It

was the time when Harold Wilson dreamed of the "white heat" of technology and British inventions led the world.

At Crowthorne, scientists were inspired by the idea of high-speed motorways carrying cars and lorries in complete safety, with drivers doing little more than deciding where they wanted to go . . . then listening to the radio.

They installed two electrical cables beneath the surface of a four-mile test track, which are still there today. The cables carried signals which allowed cars to run mile after mile along the same steady track, without the driver needing to twitch a muscle. One driver was able to read a newspaper while the laboratory's Citroën DS19, regarded as the world's first car to "fly-by-wire", lapped the Crowthorne track at 30mph for hours on end with no loss of control.

Cars, which later included a Mini and a Ford Cortina MkII, could also pick up traffic information, relayed to the driver to warn of jams and hazards — similar to information relayed now to drivers who subscribe to the Trafficmaster network.

On open days, the TRL Cortina was allowed to show off, taking passengers in the rear seats — but with no driver up front. The prospect might have seemed terrifying to those taking part at the time but the technology was proving itself, while the philosophy was simple — and one which has been touted with great



Mirror lights warn of being too close to the car ahead

enthusiasm by today's car-makers and politicians.

The Crowthorne team reasoned that if cars could travel in convoy, at a safe distance from each other, in what amounts to a "road train", driver and passengers could arrive quickly and safely while



Time for a read: but this car was travelling at 80mph

ment and rapid miniaturisation of such electronic "brains" soon followed.

Before the TRL could take advantage of that advance, the plug was pulled. Adrian Roberts, a first-year student when TRL first ran its fly-by-wire car and now a scientific officer in the vehicle engineering department, says: "We worked on these schemes until the late 1970s but then I suppose the money wasn't there and the whole thing was given up."

"There were problems, but we did show that you could have a car which effectively did not need a driver and we believed that could reduce accidents."

Today, the age of micro-technology means the TRL dream of three decades ago will be with us soon. For example, Ford, and its Jaguar subsidiary, has 3,000 engineers at its Dunton research centre in Essex working on more than 100 projects — some of which bear an uncanny resemblance to the TRL experiments.

A Jaguar XJ6 noses through busy traffic, demanding an act of faith in the driver to take his hands off the wheel. But senior engineer Wiesiek Chodnynecki explains how a tiny wind-screen-mounted video camera monitors the road's white lines, detects when the car is drifting out of its lane and steers it back on course.

Meanwhile, radar, mounted behind the front number plate, watches the cars in front. Known as Intelligent Cruise Control, the system keeps the Jaguar at a safe distance, even when the vehicle ahead slows or speeds up. If another car cuts in, the Jaguar locks on to the new "target" and adjusts position. Approach too close

and a warning horn sounds, then the accelerator pedal begins to give increasing resistance to the right foot. In the danger zone, the car automatically applies the brakes to keep the Jag a safe two seconds travel time behind the vehicle ahead.

Ford says the equipment is the way ahead and will come at a time when cars will be made not of steel but of aluminium, will be glued together not welded, and even the most humble Fiesta could sound more like a Ferrari because of a computer capable of tuning the note of the exhaust pipe.

Aluminium-bodied cars held together with three kilograms of Araldite bonding will be a third lighter and 30 per cent stronger than today's steel cars. The Araldite adhesive has been developed by Ciba Polymers for Ford's Aluminium-Intensive Vehicle. Nik Zepi, of Ciba, forecasts that Ford will make a mass-produced Scorpio-sized car in aluminium within 10 years and a Fiesta-sized aluminium car within 15 years.

Because they will be so much lighter, they could be more environmentally friendly, using 20 per cent less fuel — if they use petrol at all. Future cars, if not battery-powered, will probably be hybrids, using dual power sources, such as electrical power in town and a diesel or petrol engine for motorway journeys.

The Ford hybrid car, for instance, which uses a two-stroke petrol engine for motorway driving and a 20 kilowatt electric motor for fume-free motoring in town, is badly hampered by having to cart

around 200 kilograms of nickel cadmium batteries. Mike Gidlow, Ford Power Train systems chief engineer, admits: "We have not had the breakthrough in battery technology we had been expecting, though some day we hope there will be the battery that can match the high energy density of petrol."

No matter how clean or efficient cars become they will be not much use unless they are safe. There will be more than 130 million drivers over the age of 50 in Europe by the end of the century, each with slowing reactions, failing eyes and deteriorating hearing. They will still want to be comfortable at the wheel knowing they are safe and if the car can carry the burden, so much the better.

With the Birmingham University Centre for Applied Gerontology, Ford is developing ultra-violet headlamps to highlight street signs and pedestrians at night; bigger dials to help ailing older vision; and bigger switches to aid arthritic fingers.

Infra-red night sights can, even in the densest fog or darkest night, pick out heat emitted by the tailpipe of a vehicle in front — or the body of a child crossing the road. A sharp black-and-white picture is projected onto the wind-screen on a head-up display similar to those used by pilots of Tornado bombers during the Gulf War.

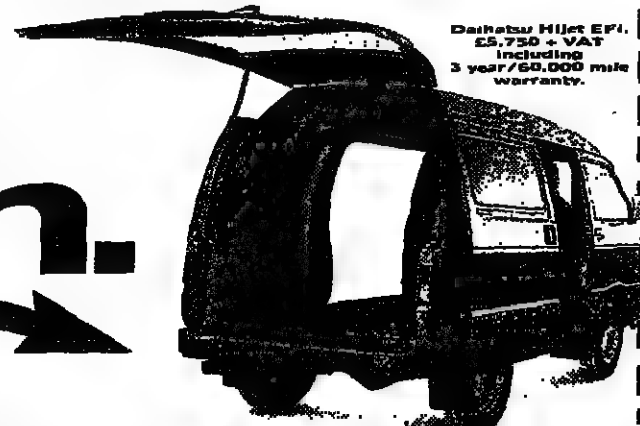
Futuristic, even far-fetched it may seem, but it is close to coming true . . . as any TRL scientist could have told you 30 years ago.

Research by Vaughan Freeman and John Reynolds

Mercedes on ice, page 10

Floors the competition.

As well as the lowest loading deck, the Hijet also floors its rivals with the biggest cargo capacity, the highest payload and the best fuel economy. No wonder 'What Van?' have voted it 'Best Microvan' for the last 2 years.



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'They have accidents and these always involve a car. The car driver is always called Mate and he is always wrong'

Don't shoot the messengers — they're lunatics

And now we come to care in the community, a controversial policy you will not encounter in other motoring columns because this column reaches areas of life others only dream about.

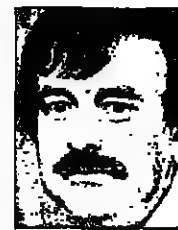
Anyone who has driven a car in London will be aware that for several years now a large bunch of lunatics has been on the loose. They lurk about the place, cackling to themselves and randomly shaking their fists.

They lean over at alarming angles and flit through the tiniest crevice between adjoining cars. During the few seconds each day when they are stationary they utilise the time leering through car windows at attractive females, which in their lexicon is any female with a reasonable chance of being pronounced alive by two doctors.

These terrifying individuals have even found jobs: they call themselves motorcycle messengers. We should of course feel sorry for them, for they have failed the audition for the circus high wire and have yet to receive a reply from Kawasaki, to whose racing manager they wrote a giant letter consisting of joined-up skid marks.

They have a curious addiction to

DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION



Peter Barnard

double yellow lines: they place their wheels in the space between the two lines and then roar along the inside of a line of cars at 40mph. They do this in teams, for the one who can re-align the highest number of near-side door mirrors is the winner, with the complete removal of said mirror scoring a bonus point.

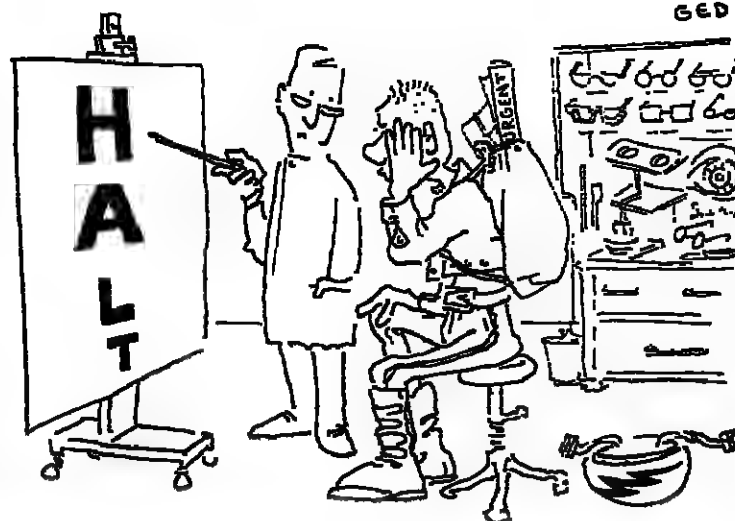
Sometimes they have accidents and these always involve a car. The driver of the car is always called Mate and he is always wrong: "Ere, Mate, you knocked me off me flippin' bike." The fact that the biker has been trying to overtake the car by using a short cut across its bonnet

is neither here nor there. I expect these madmen will claim that they have to behave in this way because they are paid by the delivery, but in my opinion Mrs Bottomley at Health and Dr Mawhinney at Transport (you'd think Health would have the doctor) need a joint policy which would rid the roads of these menaces by returning them to the secure psychiatric unit whence they came.

Perhaps the answer to the motorcycle messenger is a ban on crash helmets, but chance would be a fine thing: vehicle safety is headed in quite the other direction. The news that Mercedes and others are developing a system that will automatically detect and correct a skid was hailed this week as "the next big step in car safety".

A common claim, but a questionable one. The sort of people who cause accidents are just the sort who will blithely travel at unsafe speeds on ice and snow once they know that the car has taken over what little responsibility they ever had.

I am similarly suspicious about the real effect of seatbelts, for it has long been proven that anyone travelling on a motorway who removes his



seatbelt immediately slows down. Removal of solid headgear has the same effect on bikers.

These safety features are all manifestations of the nanny state on wheels and the consequence is that too many people take car safety and road safety to be synonymous. But any car is only as safe as its driver. I am all for safety features, but let's not kid ourselves that safety mitigates stupidity.

I love gadgets as much as the next overgrown schoolboy but I was amused to learn that some mobile telephones (though not installed car phones) send a signal that can cause airbags to inflate. Of course the police already knew this, having amended enough accidents caused by people chasing on their telephones. But do I resist answering the mobile when it rings? No comment.

THE AA'S GRIDLOCK

LONDON

A406 North Circular Rd, Upper Edmonton: road width reduced on Lea Valley Viaduct.

A219 Putney Bridge: reduced to one lane each way for repairs.

A214 Trinity Rd, Wandsworth: temporary lights at junction with Burnwood Lane.

A216 Twickenham Bridge, near Richmond: down to one lane each way until end of March.

A110 Windmill Hill, Enfield: new roadworks at junction with Church St down to one lane westbound.

A501 Kings Cross one-way system: major repairs with lane closures. Twenty-four hour restrictions. Long delays expected.

A1 East Finchley: Lane restrictions on Fallowfield Way and Lyttelton Rd.

A3 Kingston Bypass: southbound down to one lane between Shepperton Corner and New Malden exit slip until Monday. Severe delays.

SOUTH EAST

M25 Surrey J7-8 (M23/Ringate): contraflow causes regular delays and effects traffic joining from M23 northbound.

M25 Surrey J10-11 (A3/Chertsey): widening work with contraflow.

A3 Guildford, Surrey: contraflow between Abbotswood and Cathedral Interchanges. Expect delays.

A322 Dunsen Road, Dorset: roadworks at Met Office roundabout junction with the A322/A3089J-S3022.

A259 Bracknell, Berkshire: roadworks at Met Office roundabout junction with the A322/A3089J-S3022.

A27 Chichester Bypass, Sussex: contraflow between Westhampnett and Whyke roundabouts until May.

M27 Hampshire between Portsmouth and M27, contraflow for major maintenance. Also lane closures on M27 between J11-J12 (Fareham/J27).

A40 Oxfordshire: roadworks between Cassington and Eynsham.

A138 (Old A12), Cheshire, Essex: closed Colchester bound at Springfield for concrete repairs until Monday — then closed London bound until March 6.

SOUTH WEST

M4 Avon J20-21 (Almondsbury/Aust): roadworks affecting both carriageways.

M32 Avon J1-2 (Pilton/Exeter): lane restrictions both ways.

M5 Gloucestershire J11-12 (Cheltenham/Gloucester): contraflow in place until September.

M5 Devon J27 (Tiverton): contraflow and the northbound entry slip road closed.

A418 Swindon: contraflow between Tumpkin roundabout and A361 junction, with the slip road onto B4141 Hyde Rd closed.

A350 Wiltshire: roadworks and temporary traffic lights in High St. Seek alternative route.

A361 Somerset: closed between East Lyng and Burrow Bridge to HGVs — diversions via A36 towards Dumble and M5, then follow A38.

A348 Dorset: roadworks at Longham, temporary traffic lights. Long delays likely.

A3029 Bristol: Marshalls Rd closed in Cumberland Basin System at Junction Lock Bridge causing knock-on delays on Avon Rd and Cumberland Rd until March.

A4 Bath: temporary traffic lights on the London Road West due to work on Bathwick Bypass. Expect long delays especially during peak-times.

M6 Midlands and East Anglia

M6 West Midlands J4-6 near Birmingham: major work with a contraflow until March.

M5 West Midlands J3-4 southwest of Birmingham: various lane closures for barrier and lighting work, with additional restrictions some-times overnight until end of February.

A43 Silverstone, Northamptonshire: resurfacing work with major delays expected, no work on Sundays.

A38 north of Derby: major works on Little Eaton Bypass with lane restrictions and a contraflow until end of February.

A52 Nottingham Ring Road: major roadworks between Dunick and Nottingham Knight until April. Additional restrictions overnight.

A45 Stonebridge, West Midlands: flyover construction at A452 junction and widening between M42 and Stonebridge Island — 40mph limit and lane closures — until June.

A452 Shire Oak, West Midlands: major work on Chesham Rd between Castlehill Rd and London Rd, northbound closed north of Lichfield Rd (A461) with diversions.

M6 Cheshire J20-21A (Lymm/Croft): major roadworks continue near The Wall Viaduct until May. Southbound entry slip closed at J21.

M62 West Yorkshire J25-26 (Brighouse/Chain Bar): contraflow and 50mph speed restriction. Westbound entry slip is closed at J25.

M57 Merseyside J1 (Tarbock Island): roadworks and lane closures at the roundabout junction with M62, with additional restrictions at weekends until April.

M62 Humberside J34-35 (Mallory Bridge/Langham): contraflow with two lanes each way and eastbound entry slip road at J34 closed.

A14 Co Durham between Bowburn and Carlisle: contraflow with two lanes each way and 50mph speed limit until April.

M4 Gwent J25-22 (Magor/Newbury): lane restrictions and contraflow for widening between Magor and Rogiet for construction of second Severn crossing until June.

A472 Pontypool: demolition work on the Pontypool Gyratory with lane restrictions and temporary lights affecting Roehall Rd especially until end of March.

A5 Maerdy, Chwyd: improvements continue at the glyn bends. Temporary lights at times and short-term closures.

A465 West Glamorgan, between Llanydarcy and Aberdare: contraflow on the Sallings Viaduct for resurfacing until June. Long delays likely — add extra 30 minutes at peak-times.

A4223 Pontypridd: a one-way system operating on Galloway Rd because of widening work for Northbound traffic.

A40 Dyfed: Penrhygol bridge closed for strengthening. Carnarthen to Llandellio traffic diverted via A48 to Cross Hands, A476 to Porthmadog and A463 to Llandellio.

M50 Teyside J8-9 (Arley/Mulmford): contraflow in operation for roadworks.

M8 Lothian J1 (Newbridge): various restrictions between J1 and the Edinburgh City Bypass.

Edinburgh: with restrictions on High St between North and South bridges until end of June.

Glasgow: J4 and J5, down to one lane each way between Porten St and West St and M8 eastbound exit slip down to one lane.

A741 Renfrew Rd, Paisley, Strathclyde: closed roadworks for roadworks, contraflow southbound, delays expected peak-times.

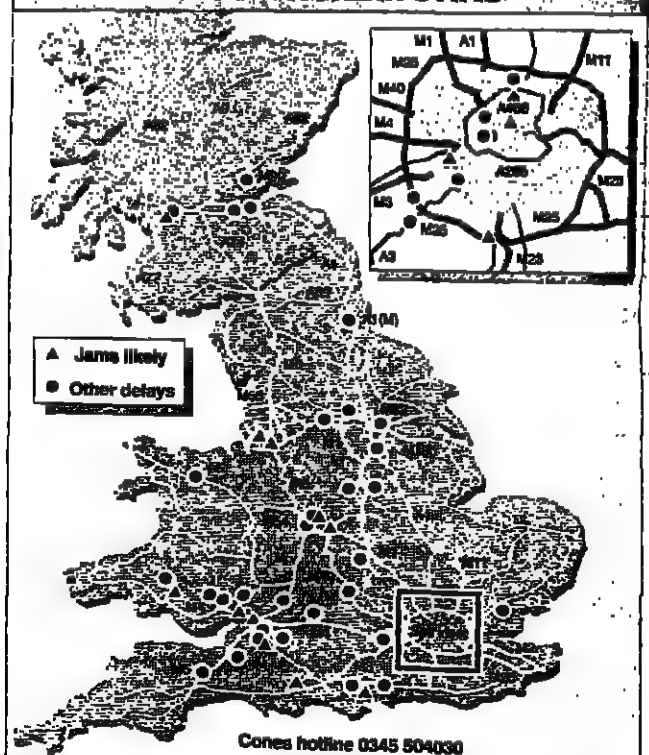
M6 Northern Ireland

A741 Renfrew Rd, Paisley, Strathclyde: closed roadworks for roadworks, contraflow southbound, delays expected peak-times.

A86 Co Londonderry: temporary lights on Glenahine Rd, Cashel for resurfacing until May.

A86 Co Londonderry: temporary lights on Greenhill Rd at junction with Ballymoney Bypass until September.

MAJOR ROADWORKS



NEWS SUMMARY

Tax dodgers' bonanza

Losses on road tax dodgers will be as much as £163 million in the last financial year, according to the Department of Transport. The loss is equivalent to 4.1 per cent of the entire annual vehicle excise duty take for 1994-95. Researchers discovered up to 15 million vehicles could be unlicensed, including 865,000 cars and vans and 370,000 motorcycles. The total loss from cars is estimated at £119 million.

Nuvolari car for sale

The 1930 Alfa Romeo raced to victory by one of the most romantic names in motor racing, Tazio Nuvolari, could fetch £100,000 at auction in London next week. The car was once owned by Prince Aly Khan and survived several owners before turning up in Wiltshire. It goes under the hammer on Monday at the Jack Barday showrooms.

Milestone for Toyota

Toyota sent its 100,000th British-built car for export this week. Tim Eggar, the industry minister, attended a ceremony at the Burnaston plant in Derbyshire, to watch the red Corolla E set out on its journey to Denmark, one of 17 export markets for the British-made Toyotas.

On the right track

The Tracker homing device, thwarting thieves in Britain, has proved spectacularly, if belatedly, successful, in South America. *Classic Car Weekly* reports the case of a 1963 Mercury taken in Miami, Florida, fitted with the Tracker Bogota, Colombia, two years later. The car was found in police there were given their detectors.



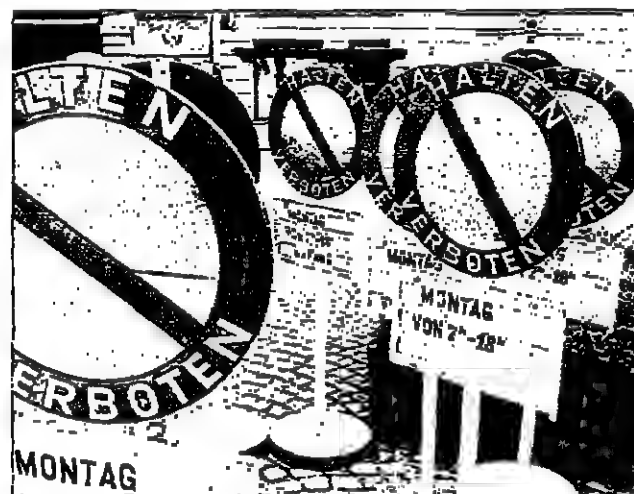
ZURICH

A WORLD leader where city authorities have installed a network of trams, trolleys and buses, which account for 60 per cent of trips to work. No wonder, as the tram and bus system controls traffic lights to give them priority, which means commuters do not have to wait long before they are on the move. At the same time, journeys to work by car are steadily falling — from 24 to 18 per cent in the past decade — because the public network is good. Each of Zurich's 340,000 inhabitants makes an average of 470 public transport trips a year, probably the highest figure in the world.



ATHENS

IF YOU think Britain has problems, one choking day in the centre of Athens will help you understand the drastic decision to ban cars from the city on some days. The city has experimented long and hard with trying to cut the number of vehicles in the city centre by using number plates to control entry, so that cars with even numbers on their registration were allowed in one day, odd numbers the next. Similar systems have operated on Sundays in Naples and Bari in Italy. But Athens, with its buildings under threat and its residents suffering, is contemplating tougher measures.



SALZBURG

FRIDAYS have been declared "ozone-free" in Salzburg in an effort to get one day clear of congestion and smog. Instead of giving out parking tickets, wardens patrol traffic jams every Thursday evening giving free bus tickets to drivers. To help concentrate motorists' minds, parking space and road space for cars has been cut while space for buses and cyclists has been increased. There are plans for city-wide traffic calming measures and an 18mph (30kph) speed limit on all the major roads in and out of the city centre, except for some key bus routes.



AMSTERDAM

PARKING is a problem for the car driver in Amsterdam because so much space has been given over to cycleways, trams and buses. The number of parking spaces was cut from 28,000 to 20,000 by the city authorities and more reductions are threatened. City fathers are trying to bring more housing into the centre so that travelling by bicycle or on foot is a realistic and pleasant way to go to work or visit leisure facilities. Already around 30 per cent of trips are made by bicycle although nearly 80 miles of tramways also shuttle commuters along quickly and easily.



BREMEN

RESIDENTS in 250 homes will have to do without a car because they will not be allowed one on their new estate in the Hollerland district. There will be only 30 parking spaces when normally an estate of that size would need 200. Cars will be pooled or hired. The idea is designed to show that people can live without cars comfortably. Planners say that not providing lots of spaces for parking means more green areas, less concrete and more generous living room in homes that do not need garages or extra land outside the front door, normally taken up by the car.



EDINBURGH

THE city is planning an attack on congestion and pollution with a wide series of measures. The task: to reduce the number of cars in the city centre by 30 per cent by the year 2010, increase public transport from 34 to 41 per cent and cycling from 2 to 5 per cent. That means expanding the 375-mile cycle path network, costing about £22 million, new rail stations and a better priority system for buses. The result: a cut of a third in road casualties within five years, a halving of casualties among children and a 20 per cent reduction in exhaust emissions.

To make jams go west, just look east

Jonathan Prynn offers some timely advice to the Transport Secretary

Drivers confronted with a traffic warden as they struggled through the misery of congested city roads had no need to worry. The polite tap on the windscreen was followed by a ticket — not for parking but a free bus ticket.

The hint from the city fathers of Salzburg in Austria was as pointed as they could make it: get out of your car and get on to public transport.

The scheme is one of the most original being adopted across Europe as the car is banned from dozens of town and city centres.

Brian Mawhinney, the Transport Secretary, will make a speech on Monday as part of his Great Debate on the future of transport in Britain. The chances that he will announce measures as radical as innovative as those being tried by our European Union partners are remote, to say the least.

However, the transport secretary would do well to study the various continental schemes that are driving cars off the road and opening up cities to pedestrians and cyclists, as well as helping to clean up the environment and relieve congestion.

In the German city of Bremen, for example, residents moving on to a new estate do so only on condition that they sign a legally binding agreement not to own a car. Just to make sure, there are only 30 parking slots on the estate of 250 homes. If they need a car,

they have to use pool transport through the local community group, or hire one.

The notion of curbing the car always raises hackles and Dr Mawhinney could expect strong opposition from road lobby groups if he intends to cut spending on roads. But the idea that there is a Europe-wide vendetta against the car is as far wide of the mark as it could be, and the accusation is surely countered by the activity to re-order priorities towards public transport in Germany — a nation that produces Mercedes-Benz and BMW and has Autobahnen without speed limits.

The Germans love their cars — but they want to go shopping without choking and to get to work on time without being stressed after spending hours in traffic jams. There is no pleasure in driving a gorgeous, go-faster limousine when it is stuck in second gear for hours with nowhere to go but follow a line of bumpers.

Steven Norris, the transport minister, might have hailed the idea of public transport, packed with "dreadful human beings", as he claimed it was,

but other nations have decided that good buses, trams and trains, coupled with facilities for bicycles, could release towns and cities from the misery of the car.

The residents of Zurich make an average of 470 journeys by public transport each year, the highest figure for any city in the world. The city's tram, trolley and bus network is so extensive and sophisticated that using public transport is easy and not a battle against the odds, as it can be in Britain.

In Münster, Germany, more than four in ten of all journeys in the city are by bike. Cars and lorries are banned from the centre, which is open only to taxis.

Other cities have adopted a more punitive approach, such as Gothenburg in Sweden, where parking charges were doubled, and Munich, where parking spaces in the centre have been so reduced there is now

little point in taking the car. So far, British towns and cities have reacted with restrictions rather than original schemes — and certainly with little that costs money in these cash-restrained times. Little surprise, as they are largely striking out alone, forced to act because their cities are simply clogged.

There are bastions of hope, though, such as Leicester, where special "safe routes" were designated to encourage children to walk to school in order to end the dreadful "school run" which clogged streets during rush hours.

York has led the way towards pedestrianisation and Edinburgh is planning a radical attack on congestion by increasing public transport so that the car becomes a less attractive daily proposition.

There can barely be a village, town or city in the country not confronting the problems of congestion and how to preserve the fabric of their surroundings and the lives of local people. Most, though, fall a long way short



'Mawhinney must come up with some new ideas'

'The tuning and excellent handling give the early Vauxhall a good claim to be the first British sports car'

Imperial Prince that led the pace race

Lord Montagu of Beaulieu
continues his series on a dozen cars that made Britain great

The significance of the Prince Henry Vauxhall, as it was generally called, although to the makers it was the C-type, was that the designer had unusually obtained power by tuning rather than by simply increasing the engine size. Combined with excellent handling, this gives the Prince Henry a good claim to be the first British sports car.

Today the British arm of General Motors, Vauxhall has a history of more than 90 years. The name comes from the Vauxhall Iron Works in south London, itself named from nearby Vauxhall Gardens, the famous 18th century pleasure park. This name is a corruption of Fulk's Hall, from a 13th century knight, Fulk Le Breant, who owned land there.

The first Vauxhall car was made in 1903 but the need for more space led to a move to Luton two years later, where the company has been ever since. By a strange coincidence, the site of the new factory had also once been a property of Fulk Le Breant.

Early Vauxhalls were strictly touring cars, but in 1908 the company entered a 20hp car in the 2,000 Miles Trial and, to its great pleasure and surprise, won its class and made best individual performance.

Designed by 25-year-old Laurence Pomeroy, who had recently joined the company, the 20hp had a new L-head side-valve engine and, in place of the previous throttle lever on the steering wheel, a floor-mounted accelerator pedal between the clutch and brake.

The engine was suitable for tuning and Pomeroy raised the 38hp output of 1908 to 60hp two years later, with no increase in the engine size of three litres. To accompany the more powerful engine, a lower, doorless four-seater body was provided, fronted by an attractive pointed radiator incorporating the famous Vauxhall flutes, which were a characteristic of the make up to 1958.

Two of the new models were entered in the 1910 Prince Henry Trial, a long-distance event in Germany organised by Prince Henry of Prussia, the motor enthusiast and younger brother of the Kaiser. They were no match for the Ferdinand Porsche-designed

Austro-Daimlers with nearly double the engine capacity, but they had trouble-free runs and Vauxhall was sufficiently pleased to offer the new model as part of the range at the 1911 Motor Show.

It still had no doors and was hardly the car to take a prospective mother-in-law for a country drive in, but it had a flexible top gear performance and was good value at £580.

More civilised models, first with small half-doors and later with full doors, followed.

And for 1913 the engine size went up to 3.9 litres. This gave 75hp at a slightly lower engine speed, and a top speed of around 75mph.

Like other sports cars of the era, these Prince Henrys mostly had open four-seater bodies. The concept of the sports car as a two-seater came in the 1920s. There were, however, exceptions, among them the handsome 1913 two-seater that we have in the National Motor Museum.

The Prince Henry, very popular among amateur

sportsmen, was entered by the company in a variety of events. Its leading driver was Percy Kidner, who was also director of engineering under Pomeroy. Among the far-flung events that Kidner entered were the 1911 St Petersburg-Sebastopol-St Petersburg Trial and the 1912 Swedish Winter Trials.

The Russian Trial, one of the few motor events held in Imperial Russia, involved about 1,650 miles over terrain in which roads existed only in name. For most of the journey

there were no hotels but the route was sufficiently close to the railway for a train to accompany the cars to provide overnight accommodation.

Kidner's car, which had specially-raised ground clearance, made a trouble-free run and established the Vauxhall name in Russia. The Imperial family had more than one, though not necessarily Prince Henrys.

In the Swedish Trial, held from Stockholm to Gothenburg and back, Kidner finished thirteenth but his native-

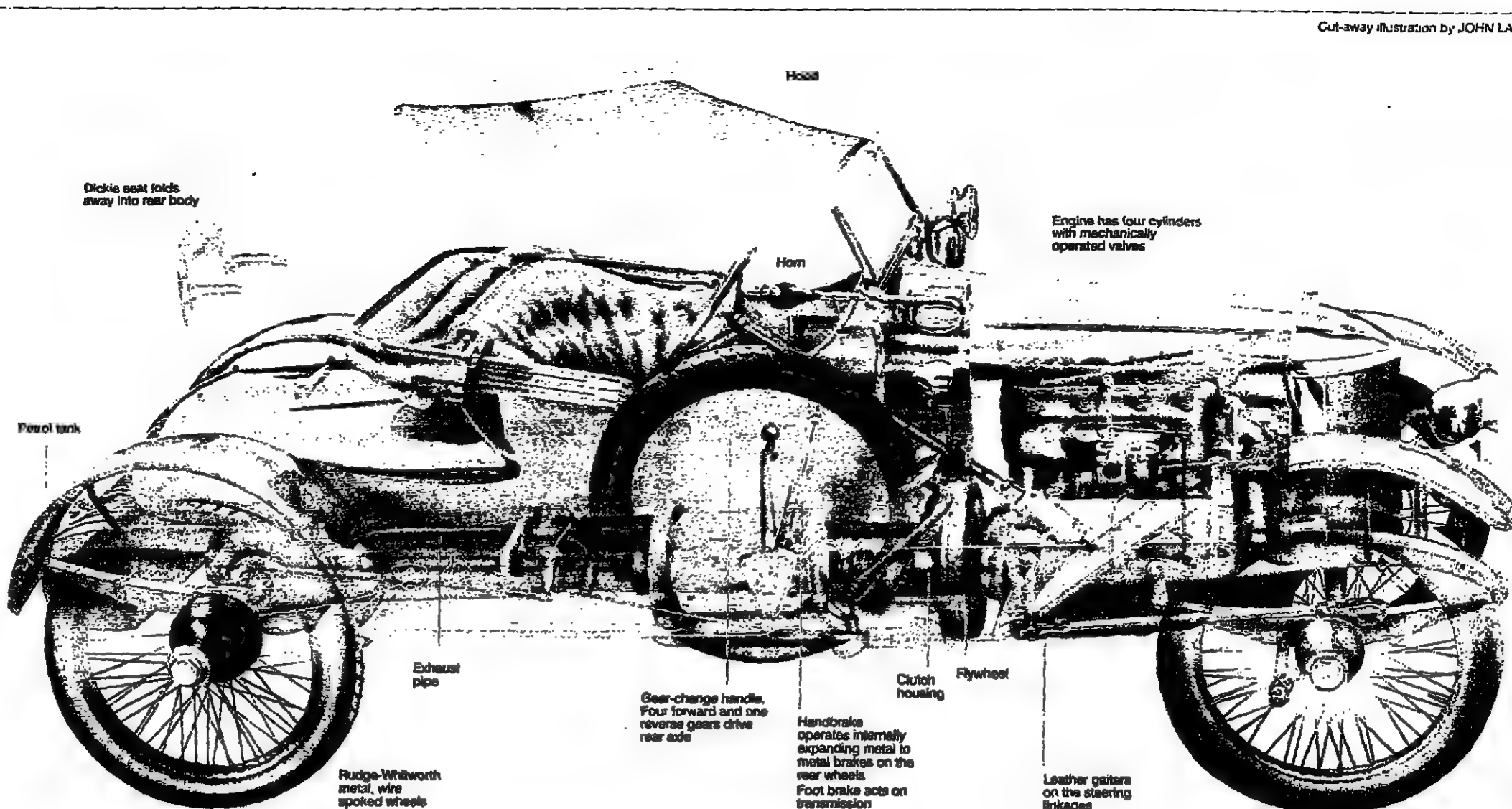
born team-mate Kjellgren was second.

By 1914, the Prince Henry was beginning to be out-classed in serious competitions and at the request of Yorkshire enthusiast Joseph Higginson, a larger engine of 4½ litres and about 90hp was installed in a Prince Henry chassis. This car, called the 30/98, went on to become the most famous Vauxhall of the 1920s. Apart from the larger engine, the main difference from the Prince Henry was that the attractive pointed

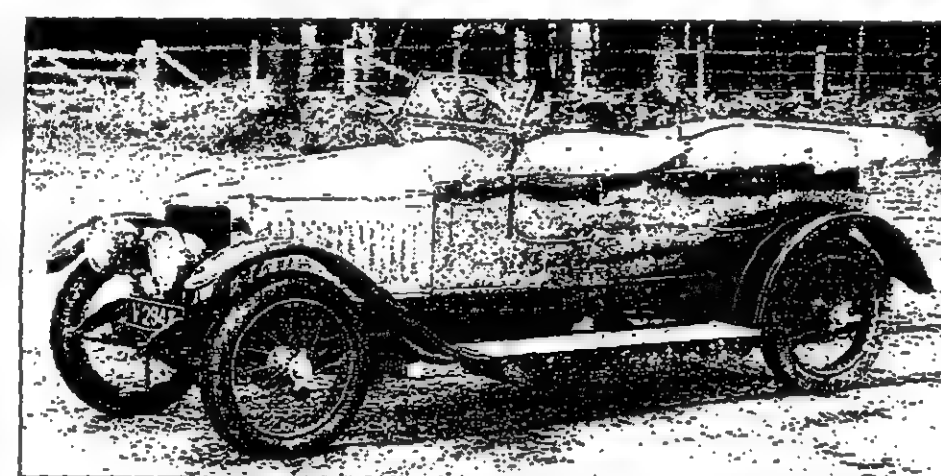
radiator was replaced by a flat one. This was because the "V" radiator had not proved too effective at cooling, however handsome it may have been. Between 1911 and 1915, 240 Prince Henrys were built (50 with the three-litre engine), of which today only about ten are thought to survive worldwide, so I count myself extremely lucky to have two in the National Motor Museum collection. One is a four-seater touring car of 1915, which I have raced and rallied in numerous events, including round New

Zealand's South Island. Driving it is an exciting and revealing experience because, although it is an Edwardian car, its acceleration and road-holding make it feel much more like a Vintage model. The other is probably the most original car in the museum — a 1913 two-seater which belongs to the Cheverton family on the Isle of Wight, who supplied carriages to Queen Victoria when she was in residence at Osborne House. It was bought new by Mrs F A Cheverton and laid up in 1923, having covered only 15,000 miles, and it has hardly run since.

My most memorable drive in the Prince Henry was the 1965 international veteran and vintage car rally on the South Island of New Zealand, which included visits to Mount Cook, Milford Sound and other remote areas. The virtually empty and sometimes dirt roads of New Zealand left me with a clear impression of what Edwardian driving must have been like. It was able to beat all the other veterans in the hill climb, as it has often done at the Prescott Hill Climb. At the moment, I am seriously contemplating entering it in the proposed 1997 Peking-Paris run.



Cut-away illustration by JOHN LAWSON



The 1915 four-door tourer Lord Montagu raced and rallied in New Zealand

Winner by design

Laurence Pomeroy (1883-1941) was one of the first professional engineers to work in the motor industry. A member of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers and Institute of Automobile Engineers before he was 30, he took over as chief engineer at Vauxhall when his boss, F W Hodges, unwisely took an extended holiday in



Pomeroy led design team

Egypt at the wrong time. Pomeroy left Vauxhall in 1919, going to America where he designed an all-aluminium car. On his return to England, he joined Daimler, where he was responsible for the Double Six V12 engine. His son, also named Laurence, was a Grand Prix enthusiast and journalist on *The Motor*.

The Cubitt — built by a building firm

Kevin Eason tells of an historic car rescued by a chance encounter

As a name in the motor-hall of fame, it barely ranks alongside Austin, Morris, Jaguar or Bentley. But the Cubitt has a unique place, not as a model designed by one of the giants of the motor industry but made by a construction firm.

The 1925 two-seater, now owned by Tarmac in the Midlands, is one of only three Cubitt cars in existence, a relic from an age when everyone wanted to join the burgeoning motor industry — yet it was only saved from destruction by a chance encounter.

Cubitts was one of Britain's best-known building firms, with Covent Garden Market, London's County Hall and the Cenotaph in Whitehall on the company's list of credits. Joining the great boom in car buying was too good to resist and, in 1918, the firm's directors decided to set up their own car factory in the unlikely setting of Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire.

Within six months, the first Cubitt was launched at just £298, described by *Autocar* as "one of the most interesting propositions at present before

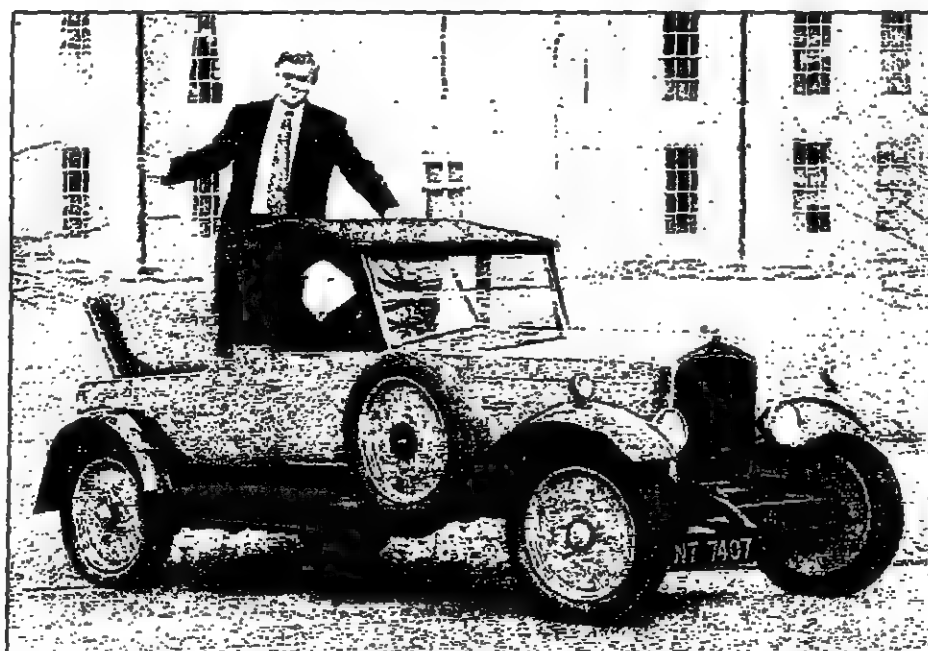
the motorist... the success of the design will be desired by all, since it is a frank attempt to rival in this country the low-priced American car".

With a meaty 20 horse power, four-cylinder engine and four-speed gearbox, the Cubitt was not short of admirers with *Autocar*'s testers of the time praising its quality, comfort and equipment.

That was about as good as the Cubitt's career got. By 1925 Cubitts had gone back to bricks and mortar and given up on cars. For a long time, only one four-seater model was known to exist — until a bizarre coincidence unearthed this two-seater sister.

Philip Crotty, a former Cubitts director, stopped to buy petrol at a filling station in Oswestry, Shropshire. While waiting, he lifted the corner of a dusty tarpaulin... and discovered the Cubitt car underneath. He paid £50 for it on the spot.

Clearly, the Cubitt had lacked care and attention. The first report from restorer Malcolm Nash diagnosed a severe dose of woodworm and rust to such an extent that some of the

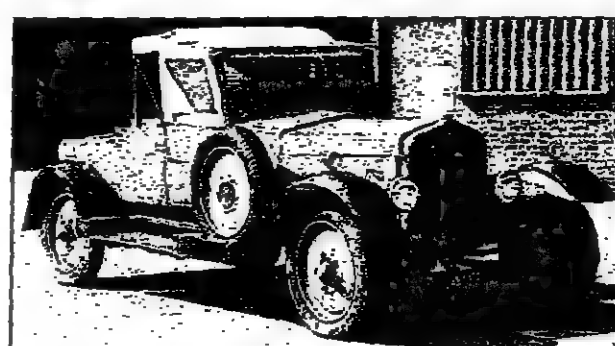


Brian Tock delights in the rescued Cubitt and, below, the car before restoration

car was held together only by paint. The clutch was seized, the gearbox and rear axle falling apart and there were no front lights or dashboard instruments or fittings and no seat frame.

Mr Nash raided the library at the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu for clues to the car's original look. A dashboard plate "Supplied by Keen's" helped him to trace the man who originally sold the car, C G Keen, who supplied it to an Oswestry farmer and then a few years later took it back in part exchange. Keen's used the Cubitt as a breakdown truck for years.

Nash had friends and colleagues combing car boot sales and auto jumbles for



spare parts for months. Bit by bit, the car was put together until in 1978 it was completed and sent to be housed at Beaulieu. Unfortunately, storage space was at a premium and Lord Montagu wanted

such a unique car to be seen more widely. Recently he offered the car to Tarmac, which bought out Holland, Hannen and Cubitts in 1976.

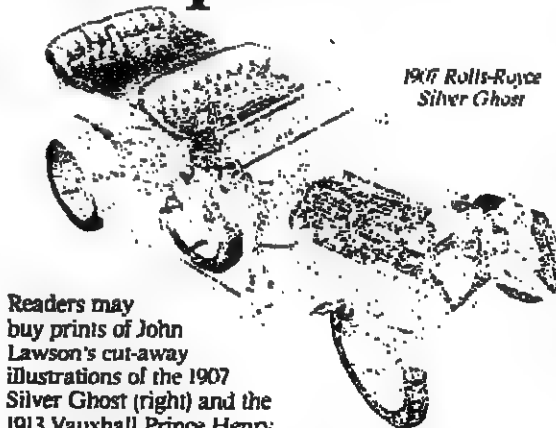
Tarmac jumped at the chance, not least because of

the novelty of acquiring a marque so rare. Apart from the four-seater in private ownership, the only other Cubitt, a near twin for the Tarmac car, came under the hammer at Sotheby's about a month ago where it was described as "a rare find, deserving careful and sympathetic restoration". Someone obviously liked it because it fetched £12,700.

The Beaulieu car had lost some of its gloss being tucked away in a corner, but it provided an entertaining break for Tarmac apprentices who were employed to carry out a second restoration in time for the car's 70th birthday this year. Now it is back in near original bright blue livery and a stark contrast to Tarmac's more familiar fleet which comprises Land Rovers, heavy lorries and JCBs.

Brian Tock, managing director of Tarmac Construction's plant division, is planning to use the Cubitt for special events. He says: "We are delighted to have it as the star of our fleet."

THE TIMES Car print offer



Readers may buy prints of John Lawson's cut-away illustrations of the 1907 Silver Ghost (right) and the 1913 Vauxhall Prince Henry Sports Car also pictured on this page.

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I've seen the future - and it works

Fiat has long been associated with robotic car production. Back in the 1970s, the company made quite a stir with a series of ads for the Strada hatchback, blending film of the gyrating robot with classical music. "Built by robots and driven by humans," became one of the best-remembered slogans of the decade.

In the 1990s, Fiat is still firmly committed to electro-mechanical labour, but the end product couldn't be further removed from the rust-prone and unreliable Strada. Although, like the Strada, the car is radically styled and has that indefinable Italian verve, the Punto is a world away in terms of build quality, mainly

Hilton Holloway visits Fiat's state-of-the-art robotic plant at Melfi

thanks to Fiat's new flagship factory in Melfi. San Nicola Di Melfi is a classic greenfield site two hours drive inland from Naples. Building started in 1991 and the first Punto rolled off the line in December 1993. The 2.7 million sq metres plant houses component suppliers on site. Melfi has its own gas-fired power station and test track.

Factory spokesmen make great play of the level of training the young (average age 29) workforce receives, which can take up to two years for the most specialised tasks. At full capacity Melfi will be

turning out 1,600 cars per day, with just 6,300 factory shifts working three eight-hour shifts, six days per week. Italian flair even extends to the power station, which has multi-tonal gasometers. In true environmental-friendly style, Melfi has a water recycling plant and its own rail links.

Melfi, like the Nissan plant in Sunderland, is totally reliant on the latest lean production techniques. Even the way workers and materials arrive at the factory has been calculated to "separate the material flow from the human flow". Component orders can be

placed hour-by-hour and arrive at the production line right on time, eliminating costly stockpiling, the holy grail of lean production. Inside, Melfi, the overwhelming sensation is of cleanliness and quiet. What activity there is seems to be carried out with remarkable discretion. It's almost as if the environmentally unfashionable car industry has been embarrassed into working quietly out of sight.

Melfi is so comprehensive that the Puntos start life as rolls of sheet steel. This is shaped by 45-ton stamping machines into the various

body panels. The panels are stacked and sent down robotic production lines that spot-weld various forms into ever bigger sub-assemblies. Inner wings join bulkheads, which then join floor pressings, and a Punto begins to take form. Watching the robot welders making up complete bodies on the inner structure is a strangely compelling sight.

The heads of the machines flick nautically from one predetermined position to another, making the panels together with 2,500 spot-welds.

each accompanied by a faint shower of sparks. Flexible design means these robotic production lines will be building three different models on the same track by 1999.

Completed bodies, checked for build accuracy by laser beams, sweep through the paint plant ("green" water-based paint, of course) and emerge gleaming to be lowered over the running gear. Engine, gearbox, front and rear suspension, exhaust and brakes are all held together in one giant sub-assembly. The body descends from above and robots emerge from under the production line to bolt the whole thing together.

Fiat Tipo keeps the price right

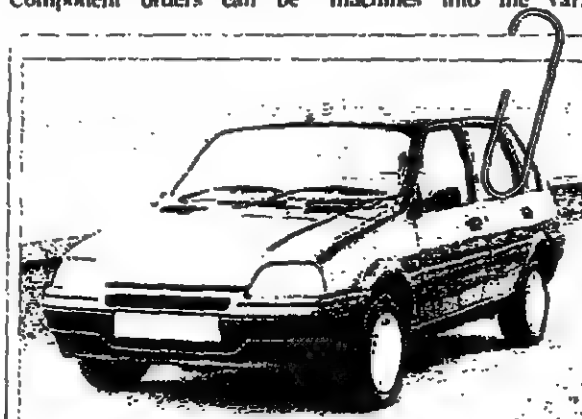
FIAT may be anxious to show off its new factory at Melfi where the Punto is built, but one of its older models, which like the Punto was awarded Car of the Year when it was introduced in 1988, must be among the best buys at present.

The Tipo looks unique and few family cars are as spacious. What's more the price hasn't changed in the past five years although the specification has been improved greatly. When the Tipo was launched in mid 1988, it confirmed the majority view of Fiat as innovative, and often cleverly thought out cars that appeal to the keen driver. It was well received by the press, who applauded the clever body design. The Tipo was blessed with bags of room, front and rear. The side cabin and shaped rear seat would take three passengers without complaint and the doors opened a cavernous 80 degrees. Rust fears were laid to rest once and for all by galvanising

70 per cent of the body panels. Yet, despite being more fun to drive than most, the Tipo never quite seized the imagination of the British public.

The Tipo is still on sale, eclipsed rather by newer, and unusually more conventional, models. But the current entry level model, the Tipo Start, has been beefed up for greater safety. It now has glitch-free fuel injection and a catalytic converter. The driver gets an airbag and all-important power steering and the stereo has been upgraded.

It's not the fastest car in the world, but it's bigger than anything this side of Mondeo-class cars and will swallow enormous amounts of kils. Five years ago the basic 1.4 DGT cost around £8,800. Remarkably, today's five-door Tipo Start costs £8,850, making it not only one of the best shopping cars but also one of the most unfairly ignored.



GOOD NEWS: The British-designed K Series 1.1-litre 59bhp engine, together with five-speed gearbox, were a revelation at the time and five years later are a match for many, more recently designed, small hatch town cars.

SAFETY RATING: Small cars are worst in accidents and the Tipo was designed before the days of airbags and seatbelt pre-tensioners.

PRICE RANGE: Between £8,800 and £23,500 for a 1991-1994 registered car. A 1994-1995 registered car costs £24,500 for a 1.4 DGT, and up to £27,000 for a 1.6 DGT.

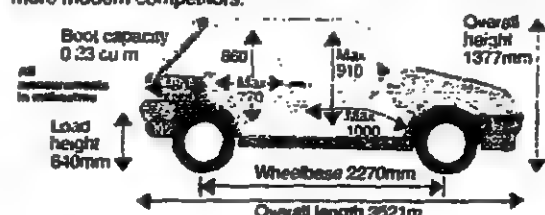
REPLACEMENT PARTS: Clutch assembly £125; Full exhaust £235; Front shock absorbers £30; Front brake pads £45; Rear brake pads £50; Gearbox (exchange) £70; Starter motor (exchange) £70; Tyre, £40-50.

OVERALL: There are plenty of Metros around so take your time and shop carefully. The engine was ahead of its time so despite drawbacks of limited rear space and any boot it can still make a sound buy.

USED CAR BRIEF

ROVER METRO

The old Austin Metro was reborn in 1990 with a Rover badge on its bonnet. The "new" Metro - which has now become the old Metro with the arrival of the Rover 100 - was a massive improvement. The highly-regarded K Series Rover engine helped, in 1.1-litre and 1.4-litre guise, with a GT 16-valve for a truly nippy town car. In three and five-door form, it offered snappy handling and ride and was a leading small hatchback, though dated now against the rash of more modern competitors.



LOOK FOR: Base models offer best value for money, particularly the 1.1-litre 59bhp engine, and 1.4S. Also a durable buy is the Peugeot-engined 1.4-litre diesel version introduced in 1992 (though beware of any diesel cars with mileage that seem suspiciously low). Look for rust round A pillar on later models and loose cabin fittings.

TO AVOID: Hot-hatch GT versions suffer from tyre wear. Metros were a popular buy with driving schools so watch out for cars that have spent their lives with their clutches being mangled. Popular in town, many Metros have a history of sometimes hidden with body filler and paint - or traffic bumps, shrubs and parking scrapes.

INSURANCE: Cover from AA Insurance (0800 444777) on a 1991 Metro 1.1L will cost a 55-year old male with full no claims bonus living in Winchester, £141 a year and a 55-year old female in Winchester with full NCB, £133.25. A 22-year old male with one year no claims bonus living in south London will pay £250, a female would pay £260.

OVERALL: There are plenty of Metros around so take your time and shop carefully. The engine was ahead of its time so despite drawbacks of limited rear space and any boot it can still make a sound buy.

50 BESTSELLING USED CARS

MODEL	PRICE	Chge
Jan-95 Feb-95		
Honda Civic DX 3dr	8625	8475 -1.74
Toyota Corolla 1.3 GL 3dr	9575	9250 -3.39
Vauxhall Astra 1.6 GLS 3dr	9295	9250 -0.32
Citroen Xantia 1.8 SR 3dr	9575	9575 0.00
Daihatsu Charade 1.6 GSR 3dr	8650	8715 -1.58
Rover 214 Si 3dr	8875	8825 -0.56
Volvo 440 1.5i 3dr	8675	8825 -1.73
Ford Fiesta RS 1800 3dr	9695	9750 -0.67
Nissan Sunny 1.6i SLX 3dr	9685	9725 -0.31
Renault 21 RT Estate	9625	9775 -1.58
Seat Toledo 2.0 GT 3dr	9625	9995 -3.73
Peugeot 306 1.6i SR 3dr	9425	9725 -3.18
Vauxhall Cavalier 1.6i Envoy 3dr	8825	8875 -0.56
Volkswagen Vento 1.8 CL 4dr	9585	9595 0.00
Alfa Romeo 75 1.7i 3dr	8495	8650 -1.82
Citroen ZX 2.0i Volcano 3dr	9575	9675 0.00
Ford Escort 1.8i Ghia 3dr	9350	9395 -0.48
Renault 19 RT 3dr	9625	9785 -1.77
Proton Persona 1.5 GLSi 3dr	8895	9725 -8.91
Peugeot 405 1.8 GR 4dr	9125	9775 -5.64
Suzuki Vitara 2.0i LX 4dr	9250	9395 -1.57
Vauxhall Corsa 1.6i GSi 3dr	9650	9775 -1.27
Suzuki Cappuccino 2dr	9650	9850 -2.00
Volkswagen Polo 640 3dr	7975	8095 -1.50
Ford Mondeo 1.8i LX 3dr	10195	9895 -2.40
Rover Montego 2.0 LX Estate	8775	8825 -0.57
Vauxhall Cavalier 1.8i LS 3dr	9395	9150 -2.60
Volvo 460 1.8i 4dr	9325	9495 -1.82
Volkswagen Golf 1.6 CL 3dr	9625	9495 -1.78
Mazda 323 1.6 GLX 4dr	9125	8995 -1.92
Honda Concerto 1.5i 3dr	8995	8895 -1.11
Ford Escort 1.8i LX 3dr	9575	9750 -1.83
Nissan Primera 1.8i SLX 3dr	10095	9995 -0.99
Renault Laguna 1.8i RN 3dr	9685	9875 -1.86
Suzuki Vitara 2.0i LX 4dr	9650	9850 -2.00
Toyota Carina 1.6i 4dr	9550	9550 0.00
Rover 216 SLi 3dr	9375	9550 -1.87
Peugeot 405 1.6i GLT Estate	9675	9775 -1.03
Daihatsu Applause 1.6 GLX 3dr	8595	8595 0.00
Citroen ZX 1.4i Avantage Estate	9095	8995 -1.01
Fiat Tempra 2.0i SX 3dr	9675	8850 -8.81
Alfa Romeo 33 1.6i Sportwagon	9695	8650 -10.48
Vauxhall Cavalier 2.0i GLS 4dr	9095	8995 -1.10
Toyota Starlet 1.3 GLi 3dr	9550	9725 -1.83
Volvo 440 1.8i Si 3dr	9995	9995 0.00
Renault Clio RSi 3dr	7975	8125 -1.88
Nissan Sunny 1.8i LX 3dr	9695	9725 -0.31
Mitsubishi 1600 GLX 3dr	8525	8325 -2.10
Ford Mondeo 1.8i LX 4dr	10195	9825 -2.81
Rover 420 SLi 4dr		

Prices rounded to simulate actual dealer forecourt prices. HB = hatchback S = saloon. Price changes based on L-reg, low mileage cars. Figures supplied by CAP Nationwide Motor Research.

THE GTI, that beloved go-faster toy of young drivers which once faced extinction, is back.

Figures show a remarkable revival in sales of the infamous "hot hatchbacks", having weathered the storm of huge insurance price rises of the past few years. Trouble was that GTIs were not only popular with buyers but also with thieves.

New security equipment seems to be cutting thefts and easing insurance worries judging by the latest figures. There are also plenty of good deals to be had with show-

rooms encouraging buyers through offers of cashbacks and discounts.

Volkswagen was first to report the change, selling twice as many Golf GTIs and VR6 models in January as in the same month last year. The Germans have improved security equipment but cut prices by about £1,000 to keep cars moving against stiff competition. The result? GTIs used to account for 9 per cent of Golf sales; this year that figure is 20 per cent. Peugeot also reports that sales of its 306 XSi and Si6 models are up 17 per cent.

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Keeping a grip: the Electronic Stability Programme being put to the test on 6ft of ice. It foresees problems ahead and counters skidding by automatically controlling braking on every wheel

The car is £76,000 worth of Mercedes SL500; under the great slab of sloping bonnet is more than 300 horsepower in a 5-litre V8, capable of shoving this rich man's, brutally styled big sports coupe to 60mph in a mere 6.2secs, then on to a genuine 155mph maximum.

You are, however, driving it round a half-mile diameter circular track cut between snow walls, on top of a 6ft-thick skin of ice over a lake in northern Sweden. Common sense tells you to drive very gently; but you have the accelerator pedal thrust to the ice board, which even in a much less powerful car would have its engine howling and driving wheels spinning helplessly as the car slid uncontrollably outwards.

The Mercedes is beautifully under control, motoring safe and securely round the circle at a stately 50mph, its engine ambulating over sweetly.

Of course, traction control systems, which a machine like this Mercedes will certainly have, are well known now; after all, Mercedes was, with BMW, the first to offer what they call ASR in German (which roughly translates as anti-slip system).

Traction control works in a similar way to anti-lock brakes. It senses when a driving wheel starts to spin uselessly and, usually by a

mixture of automatic control of braking and engine, gets the wheel gripping again.

It has its limits, though, which are easily demonstrated round a deserted test circle on ice. You drive, listening to the engine regardless of your flat-to-the-floor right foot pushing the car along. You keep your foot down and the car gradually goes faster — until either the front or back wheels lose grip, and you slide outwards.

Try the same experiment with this big beauty and things start off the same; the speed over the ice rises steadily. But as the car gets near to where experience tells you it should start to skid, you feel a small hesitation, then another, and another, as if the brakes were being prodded momentarily, the car wriggling slightly as it checks itself.

You keep that foot down, and in a short time the Mercedes gets into an irregular rhythm of these small jerks, feeling like someone driving hesitantly; there's a little yellow triangle flashing at you from the middle of the speedometer, and now you can't help instinctively correcting the small incipient slides as the SL starts to break

Seeing hazards by ESP

Mercedes has developed a system that corrects loss of control before it happens. Michael Scarlett tests it



Cold comfort: the Mercedes test site at Arjeplog in northern Sweden

away, but then doesn't. Instead it settles into cornering in small front and rear wheel breakaways, mostly more rear, so that the car's nose is pointing inward slightly most of the time.

This is what Mercedes-Benz calls the Electronic Stability Programme, which abbreviates to ESP — quite suitable in English because there is a touch of extra sensory perception about this electronic con-

trol system's action. To appreciate how clever it is, there is a switch marked ESP which you press.

The yellow warning triangle flashes, then glows steadily to remind you that you're on

your own now. You drive gingerly, with just a touch on the beautifully progressive pedal, as anything firmer on the throttle sends the revs rising and the tail swinging out: you try to increase the speed gradually; the car becomes uneasy, and soon slides out helplessly.

How does ESP work? Fundamentally, the idea rests on a simple brake problem well known to owners of pre-war or badly-kept cars.

If, for whatever reason, the brake in, say, a left-side wheel works better than the other three, when you slow, the car pulls or swerves to the left.

Although it does not interfere with normal braking, ESP has automatic control over the brakes, so it can work any one wheel's brake alone. If the car's back wheels start to slide outwards — oversteer — whilst traction control restrains the engine, ESP simultaneously brakes the outside front wheel, which makes a correcting pull on the car. If the front wheels begin skidding outwards — understeer — ESP applies the inside rear wheel's brake, to pull the car round.

How does ESP "know" that the car is skidding, or divert-

ing from the driver's intended direction of travel? In a car like the test SL500, there are already a variety of sensors needed for the anti-lock braking (ABS) and traction control, and ESP relies on most of these.

It does, however, need some extra ones. Devices which measure movement of the steering wheel, accelerator pedal and brake pedal "tell" ESP what the driver intends. Another measures lateral "g" — how hard the car is being cornered — and finally there is the "yaw" sensor, which detects how much the car tends to rotate about its centre; in other words, it senses skidding.

As with the modern form of anti-lock braking, and traction control, Mercedes-Benz developed the Electronic Stability Programme jointly with Bosch, the German electronics firm. Mercedes says, from its Stuttgart headquarters, that it is "positive that in a few years' time, this active safety-enhancing system will have acquired the same significance as the airbag has in passive safety today".

ESP will appear on all S-class and SL cars, plus the E-class replacement, towards the end of this year, at around £700 extra, and on the rest of the Mercedes-Benz range — including the projected Mercedes "baby" car, the A-class — by 2000 at the latest.

NEWS

Virgin sets out to master traffic jams

Virgin Atlantic has installed Trafficmaster, the motorway information system, in its chauffeur-driven fleet of 80 Range Rovers.

The cars take business flyers to and from airports and Virgin says that information about heavy traffic on the motorways and 400 miles of trunk roads covered by Trafficmaster is vital to avoid hold-ups.

Renault success

Renault scored two successes in *Fleet Car* magazine's Car of the Year awards. The Laguna RT 2.0 was judged best in the upper medium class while the Clio RL Prisma 1.9D was voted best supermini.

New Audi diesel

Audi has introduced a new entry level diesel model to its A6 range. Starting at £19,200, the 1.9 TDI should boost sales of Audi diesels, predicted to rise by 65 per cent this year to more than 1,400 cars. Top of the range is the 140bhp 2.5TDI estate at £24,935.

£14,375 Sedan

Peugeot has added an automatic to its 306 Sedan range, made at Ryton, near Coventry. With a four-speed auto box mated to a 2.0-litre engine, the new Sedan costs £14,375.

Happy Honda

The Ministry of Defence has ordered £1 million worth of motorcycles from Honda. The ST1100 bikes will be used by military police and for escort duties, replacing some BMW and Norton machines.

Discount offer

Low-risk drivers are being offered discounts worth up to 65 per cent by Legal & General. The company says that there will be special prices for people who do not drive to work or use their cars for business.

Opening move

Johnson Matthey, the world's biggest manufacturer of catalytic converters, this week opened a European Automotive Technology Centre at Royston, Hertfordshire. The £5 million centre will pioneer clean-exhaust technologies.

Prices change

Citroen prices are up by an average 13 per cent. However, increases on the Xantia mid-range cars — competing against tough rivals, such as the Ford Mondeo, Vauxhall Cavalier and Rover 600 — are held to under 1 per cent.

Fast forward: modern aids mean the disabled can swap their three-wheelers for the latest sports cars

Keep the carriage, mine's a Porsche

When, nearly ten years ago, I found myself in Stoke Mandeville hospital with a broken back after a helicopter crash, I wrote down a list of pros and cons to my new lifestyle. The "good news" list mostly contained silly things like "shoes will last for ever" and "I won't have to play squash any more". The rather longer "bad news" one included the fear that I would lose my beloved Sunbeam Lotus in favour of one of those odd light-blue invalid carriages. I was right about the squash, wrong about the car.

As part of its rehabilitation programme, the hospital arranged a driving assessment in a car modified with hand controls, and I discovered I could drive almost any vehicle I liked. When I left hospital I did actually sell the Lotus and buy a VW Scirocco, but I could have stuck with it or indeed bought almost any car I wanted.

The only concession I made to the disability at the time was to switch to an automatic, which is more simply adapted. Today, with exactly the same conversion but for a lot more cash, I could drive a semi-automatic Porsche 911 with sequential gear buttons on the steering wheel.

The most basic set of hand controls for an automatic consists of rods bolted to the brake and accelerator pedals, which attach via a system of levers and linkages to a single hand-positioned below the steering wheel. You pull for go and

Andrew Healey, who is disabled, explains why he could now drive just about any car he chooses

push for stop. You soon get used to it (on my second drive in the Scirocco I had to make an emergency stop when a small boy ran out in front of the car) and you can keep both hands on the wheel for most of the time.

Because the controls are fitted to the existing pedals, the car may continue to be driven in the conventional manner and can be sold to an able-bodied driver just by undoing a few bolts.

All my adaptations have been fitted by Brian Page of Egham in Surrey, who showed me what else I could have chosen, depending on degree of disability and depth of pocket. First, there are kits available for any car with automatic transmission. Second, most manual cars can be adapted by fitting a microswitch inside the gear knob which operates a servo to depress the clutch pedal. So you grasp the lever and select a gear after the servo does its job. The original French design costs about £1,500 now, so Brian is developing his own.

If my disability meant I had difficulty reaching the column

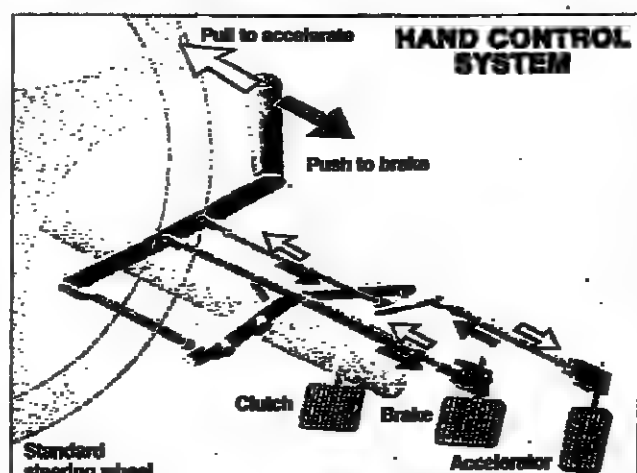
stalks, I could have chosen a steering ball which incorporates all the switches, including the horn. Finally, if my arms were very weak, I could incorporate a mechanical steering amplifier to translate my slight hand movements to wheel ones. My friend Trevor Jones uses one of those in his Chrysler Voyager passion wagon.

A pitfall arises with a manual because under some circumstances, you can run out of hands — changing gear on a corner requires some nifty handwork. It gets worse. Older Porsches have the handbrake on the right-hand side — try doing a hill start in one of those.

The drawback with hand controls is that they are specifically made for each model — not just make — of car, so if you change your Scirocco for a



Times past: the traditional invalid carriage is now far from the only option available to the disabled



VW Golf, as I did, you still need to buy a whole new set of levers and linkages. If only car manufacturers built their steering columns with a degree of commonality — as apparently they do in America — that would be the single most important advance in mobility for disabled drivers since the invalid carriage.

Actually, I was wrong about the invalid carriages as well. Although numbers have steadily declined since the

Getting back on the road

THROW a problem about driving and disability at Morigue Cornwell and she will have an answer. As director of Banstead Mobility Centre in Carshalton, Surrey, there are few problems she hasn't seen and found a solution to. (Anne-Marie Sapsford writes.)

She tells some extraordinary stories: there was the MS sufferer who arrived at the centre driving an ordinary car, who had to take her hands off the steering wheel to lift her foot from the brake to the accelerator. There was another driver so badly crippled by arthritis that she always had to have a passenger to help steer round sharp corners and to park. There was the amputee who had driven an ordinary manual car — without incident — for 20 years, using just one hand and his knee to help the steering wheel when necessary. In each case, the centre offered easier and safer adaptations.

"The point is you wouldn't go out in your bedroom slippers to do the gardening," says Mrs Cornwell. "You need the right tools and equipment for the job, and more than anything else we give information about what is available."

There are special vehicles at the centre to demonstrate gadgets designed to help disabled drivers and passengers.



Morigue Cornwell: 'We found many drivers who had suffered strokes were safer than able-bodied ones'

One of its main functions is to offer a full assessment for those affected by, for example, a stroke, cerebral palsy, head injury or spina bifida to determine their ability to drive. There is an outdoor road system complete with crossings and junctions where clients can be given a test and some drivers will be given a road test. Only around 7 per cent are judged unsuitable as drivers.

"Around half the people we see are drivers who want to go back to driving," says Mrs Cornwell. "The others are young disabled people who want to learn. There are many who come here thinking they are no longer fit to drive, but it is often a simple question of the car not being modified to the individual."

"We did a research project comparing the abilities of 50 disabled drivers to those of 50

matched able-bodied drivers. Many of the former had retrained, and we found more of the able-bodied drivers had bad driving habits, and were therefore a danger to others. "Mobility is the key for disabled people to employment, social life, education, everything. Whole families can become immobile because one member is disabled and yet there is so much that can be done."

A basic assessment costs about £50, or for those with brain damage as well as physical injury it is £90. Write, enclosing SAE, to Banstead Mobility Centre, Damson Way, Orchard Hill, Queen Mary's Avenue, Carshalton, Surrey SM5 4NR (0181-770 1151). Mobility Advice and Vehicle Information Service (MAVIS), Department of Transport TRL, Crowthorne, Berks RG11 6AU, (0344 770456).

0181 770 1151



Is he for real? Jennai Cox and her silent partner finding in Covent Garden that you can fool some of the people some of the time, but...

Safe and soundless with Albert, the quiet man

My friend Albert is not good company on a long journey. In fact, in a contest between watching paint dry and talking to Albert, the damp Dufux is a clear winner. Dull as he is, though, his stoic quality could be helpful to motorists.

Albert is a dummy: an inflatable bag of wind with a mop of hair that would do Elton John proud. Prop him up in the passenger seat and he becomes a bodyguard, the strong if somewhat silent type who could deter a thief from forcing his way in.

Motorists are at their most vulnerable when alone. Seconds at traffic lights are enough for a car-jacker to get inside and steal — or worse. Women are clearly the most likely victims, and the idea for Albert came from Maggie Lamb, a viola player with the Philharmonia Orchestra.

Maggie was travelling home through London late one night when a man leapt into her car at traffic lights and demanded she take him home. She had the presence of mind

Strong but silent, is he the lone woman's perfect passenger? asks Kevin Eason

Company, says: "We have had some bizarre experiences with him. One woman was stopped at a police road block and asked for her passenger's name and details. Another left Albert in the car while she popped into a shop and a traffic warden asked him to move the car along."

To test Albert's credibility, we put him in a car with Jennai Cox, a researcher at *The Times*, and sent them off to Covent Garden. "The reaction was largely acceptance," Jennai says. "A few people did a double-take. They were not sure whether Albert was just another pasty-faced commuter, and it was only when they walked right up to the car that they could see he was not real."

It was uncanny because a couple of times I looked at him as though I really was with someone else."

Albert was supplied by The Silent Passenger Company, Victoria House, Guildford Road, Ash, Aldershot, Hants GU12 6DX. Price: £29.99.

Mr Woodman, who now runs the Silent Passenger

Cavaliers in fires mystery

A Car 95 investigation has triggered a string of irate complaints about vehicle blazes, reports Tony Dawe

Vauxhall is being pressed by insurance companies and shaken motorists to explain mystery fires which have wrecked dozens of Cavaliers, the firm's best-selling model.

Most fires started without warning as drivers were at the wheel. The first sign for many was that the windscreen wipers began to work unexpectedly or that the dashboard lights came on. The end result for most was that their cars were written off.

Anxious motorists and insurers contacted Car 95 following our investigation last week which led Renault to recall 4,000 Espace turbo diesels to modify a fault which had caused several fires while drivers and their families were inside the "people-carriers".

The investigation also prompted more Espace owners to report similar fires and

who saw his 1989 model go up in smoke after noticing a strong smell of burning.

Mr Cross suspected a manufacturing fault might be to blame, and obtained a long list of written-off Cavaliers from the insurance industry's total loss register. From this he identified 250 write-offs caused by mystery fires. He then wrote to 53 insurance companies for details and has pinpointed 38 similar cases.

"Two had even affected Cavaliers with consecutive number plates," he said. "All of these cars caught fire spontaneously. One motorist had just dropped his wife at church when the windscreen wipers and wash came on unexpectedly. As he took the key out of the ignition, he noticed smoke under the dashboard and then the starter motor engaged and the fire worsened."

Vauxhall said yesterday that it had examined all these incidents and believed they were unconnected. "We are satisfied there is no problem and that in many cases wiring had been rerouted following accident damage or the fitting of alarms and extra sound systems," a spokesman said.

Mr Cross has now written to the transport department's vehicle inspectorate, seeking full details of the investigation because of continuing concern about a rectifiable fault.

Owners of the many Renault Espaces which caught fire are also considering further action following Renault's admission that a fault had led to the blazes. Many whose cars were gutted have complained that they were not compensated in full by their insurance companies.

Martin Halliday, of Gillingham, Norfolk, who saw his wife, parents and children escape as his car caught fire, said: "If Renault is to blame, the company should pay the disputed amount of our claims and compensation for the trauma and inconvenience we have suffered." He wants other victims to contact him to discuss possible joint legal action.

Insurance companies including the Norwich Union and Prudential are pursuing the fires with Renault and if they obtain refunds for claims they have met, they will restate no-claims discounts for those involved.

Astras recalled

Vauxhall yesterday recalled all Astras built in the last three years because of a potential fire risk when the car is being filled with petrol. Tests in Germany have found that static electricity during refuelling can cause a small flame which could burn motorists as well as the car.

to complain of Renault's "indifference" to the fault. Some said their Renault dealers knew nothing about the recall.

Most of the mystery Cavalier fires affected 1.6, 1.8 and 2-litre models, registered between 1989 and 1991, and started behind the dashboard, leading to speculation that they could have been caused by a common electrical fault.

Vauxhall ordered modifications to this group of models in 1991, warning that the engine wiring harness could foul the starter solenoid terminal or clutch housing. The company insisted yesterday, however, that the spate of mystery fires were "isolated cases with no pattern".

The catalogue of Cavalier fires has been drawn up by Martin Cross, claims superintendent for the Ansva insurance company. He handled a claim from a Cavalier owner



The Cavalier: dozens destroyed by mystery fires

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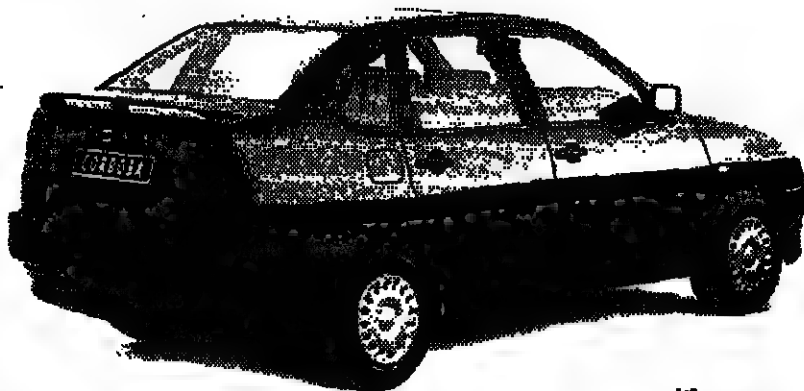
To follow we have the delicious Toledo, with class leading luggage space, ABS and driver's airbag. With power steering as standard on all the models there's a lot to get your teeth into.

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SEAT



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*Prices exclude £410 cost of delivery to dealer premises and number plates. £500 cashback offer only applies to retail sales registered between 10th and 28th February 1995. Separate schemes exist for Mobility customers.

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OUTDOORS



The mole:
Should we tolerate or simply terminate?

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PLUS: Paul Heiney with Farmer's Diary, page 8

GAMES



Test your wit on our Punch caption contest

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PLUS: The Listener Crossword, page 21

TRAVEL



Libby Purves in the Virgin Islands

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PLUS: A nautical day in Portsmouth, page 17

ARTS



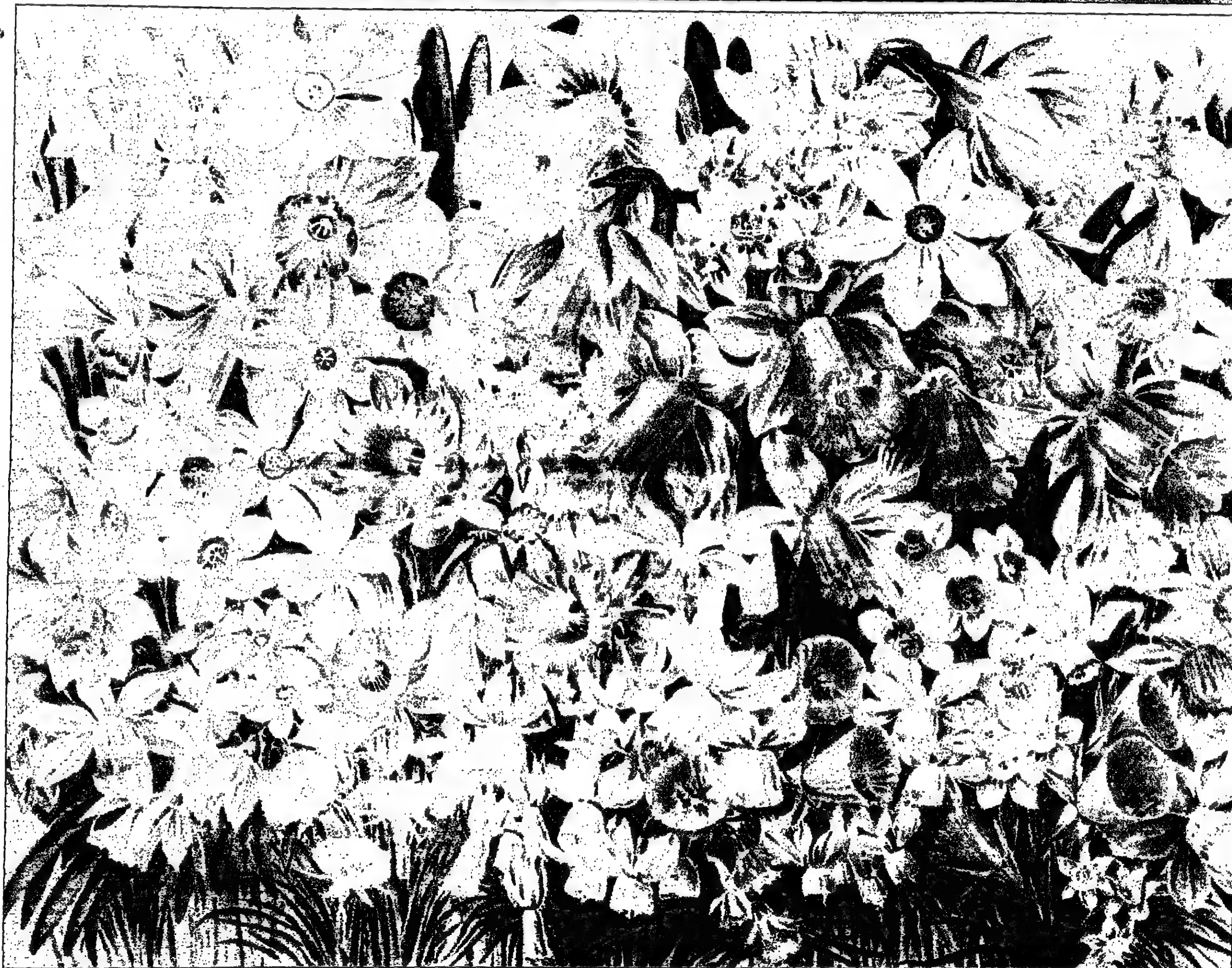
Richard Morrison: The ailing career of a material girl

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PLUS: The RSC and its touring caravan, page 5

WEEKEND

THE MAN WHO BOULET'S DREAM



How many flowers grow in an English country garden? When the garden is Martin Harwood's, the answer is about 100,000. And they are almost all daffodils. A few miles down the road, near Chobham in Surrey, is his over-flow garden, an acre of nothing but daffodils. Together, Mr Harwood's gardens make up the National Collection of Narcissi. In his living room window stands a smiling ceramic gnome, proudly holding a vase of show daffodils. This is "Mr Daff", and there are no prizes for guessing who he is meant to be.

Life for Mr Harwood has been

narcissocentric for many years. As a boy he was a specialist stamp collector. Now those collections live in the attic, and the lasting passion is daffodils. He grows 2,800 cultivars and has hundreds of the wild species and their forms. Altogether, his is the largest collection of one kind of plant in this country.

In gardening there can be two disparate camps of serious collectors — the "species snobs" who will grow nothing without a pedigree vouching for its wild origin, and the lovers of "vulgar" man-made flowers. Mr Harwood's passion for daffodils encompasses both. He can get just as excited about the species *Narcissus hedraeanthus*, with

By Stephen Anderton

flowers barely reaching an inch from the soil, as he can about tall, fully double daffodils whose raggedy petals display all the charm of a sucked orange.

It was only when he and his wife, Tracy, moved from nearby Byfleet to their present cottage in the countryside, in 1977, that Mr Harwood, a confessed townie, became at all interested in gardening. He plunged straight into growing daffodils, not knowing quite why, and began showing them not in the local shows but in the national

shows of the Daffodil Society at Westminster and in the Midlands at Solihull. Six years later he was growing a staggering 1,600 varieties in his back garden, thoroughly hooked on collecting and combining it all with a busy, full-time job as assistant to the chief executive of the local authority.

Then the boys, Daniel and Graeme (now eight and ten years old), came along and more space was needed. So Mr Harwood set about extending and altering the house, a small farm worker's cottage on a quiet country lane, as a major DIY project. "I don't like plastering and I don't like electrics, but the rest is mine," he says. Walls came down

and walls went up. Work was gradual, and the family lived there through it all, because by then the daffodils had become an even more serious preoccupation. The collection was now recognised as the National Collection of Narcissi, by the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens (NCCPG), which was formed in 1978 to conserve our garden plants heritage after garden historians began to realise that many varieties of garden plants had become extinct, victims of garden-centre standardisation. A council spokesman says: "It has

Continued on page 3, col 1

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CHOICE

Fancy an evening at the opera, theatre, cinema or the concert hall? *Times* critics pick the best

MUSEUMS

John Russell Taylor

THE RUMBUSTIOUS WORLD OF THOMAS ROWLANDSON: And pretty raunchy it sometimes is, even though this show of Rowlandson's usually hand-coloured prints, produced between 1774 and 1822, does not venture into his most explicitly sexual work. There is still plenty left in which one can appreciate his gleefully scatological approach to political satire, and a certain amount where the paradoxically poetic quality of his observation is also in evidence. Also, *Drawings by Adriaen and Isaac van Ostade*, of 17th-century peasants, basic but not bawdy; and Bonaventura Genelli's two extraordinary series of Neo-Classical prints *From the Life of an Artist* and *From the Life of a Wastrel*. British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1 (0171-636 1555) Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sunday 2.30-6pm, until April 23.

GEOFFREY CLARKE: Having just turned 70, Clarke is at that difficult stage for any artist, around too long to be surprising anymore, but not yet a Grand Old Man. He has always made less splash in the world than his close contemporaries Anthony Caro and Eduardo Paolozzi, but this touring retrospective should help to redress the balance. His sculpture, with its abstracted forms, sometimes sinuous, sometimes spiky, is always distinctive and shows his ability to absorb what is going on around him without being dominated by it. His early prints show a surprising kinship with Klee and the wartime Neo-Romantics, while in the later metal sculptures he seems to arrive at a wholly personal reconciliation between organic and mechanic. Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Jordan Well, Coventry (01203-832 381) Mon-Sat 10am-5.30pm, Sun 2-5pm, until March 26.

JAZZ

Clive Davis

TRISTANO: Of all the innovators who explored new paths for improvisation in the Fifties, as the bebop revolution gradually ran out of steam, the introverted pianist Lennie Tristano was the most shadowy. Rejecting the well-worn chordal structures that had served so many bop musicians up to that time — structures that had grown as rigid and predictable as those they had originally supplanted — Tristano devised more rigorously composed forms, using irregular metres and polytonality. In his fastidious work you can sense influences of both "cool jazz" and the early stirrings of the avant garde. Birmingham Jazz's tribute to Tristano is built around the Dutch pianist Michel Braam, who will perform "C Minor Complex" and "Turkish Mambo", as well as new pieces that draw on Tristano's ideas. He will be joined by his compatriots Wilbert de Joode (bass) and Frank Nieldner, plus two fine young British players, Martin France (drums) and the saxophonist Iain Ballamy, both former members of Loose Tubes. Midlands Arts Centre, Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham (Info 0121-414 5703/454 2371) tomorrow, 8pm.

ANDY SHEPPARD/CARLA BLEY: There are those that feel that Andy Sheppard produces his most inventive soloing not in his small group nor in his orchestra, known as Big Co-Motion, but in the occasional trio he leads with the American composer and piano player Carla Bley and the bassist Steve Swallow. Though their early ventures together may have been marked by a few false starts and thematic cul-de-sacs, their musical conversations have grown ever more confident and adventurous. The iconoclastic Bley never takes herself too seriously, and there should be humour aplenty in the guest appearance by the comedian and raconteur Ivor Cutler. Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank, London SE1 (0171-928 8900) Friday.

CLASSICAL

Richard Morrison

THE FORTIES: At Symphony Hall in Birmingham and at London's South Bank, an enormous festival called "The Forties: War and Peace" has just opened and runs for two months. It is the latest instalment of the "Towards the Millennium" series which celebrates a decade each year and, as before, Sir Simon Rattle and his City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra are at its heart. Tonight in London they repeat the glorious virtuoso programme of Stravinsky's *Orpheus*, Messiaen's *Trois Petites Liturgies* and Bartok's *Concerto for Orchestra* which launched the festival in Birmingham. In later concerts the music ranges from Elliott Carter to Glenn Miller. Festival Hall, South Bank London SE1 (0171-928 8900), tonight, 7.30.

HELDENTENOR'S JUBILEE: Despite his name, Alberto Remedios is as British as roast beef — and indeed one of the best-loved of British tenors. His sterling service as Siegfried and Siegmund in the great English National

A French dentist showing a specimen of his artificial teeth and false palates from *The Rumbustious World of Thomas Rowlandson*

Opera cycles of Wagner's Ring in the early 1970s endeared him to British opera audiences, and his Italianate lyricism, allied to a herculean strength, made his particularly listenable sort of "heldentenor". Now he is 60, and celebrates with a recital of everything from Handel to Wagner. Another ENO veteran, Victor Morris, accompanies. St John's, Smith Square, London SW1 (0171-222 1061), Sun, 7.30pm.

OPERA

Rodney Milnes

THE CUNNING LITTLE VIXEN: Janáček's pantheistic hymn of praise to the natural world makes a welcome return to the ENO repertory in the classic David Pountney



Lesley Garrett: resourceful

production which, like the opera itself, has everything: broad comedy fitting to its source as a newspaper strip-cartoon — it's an ideal first opera for children — and a sense of wonder at nature's powers of self-renewal. Maria Bjornson's sets and costumes are as beautiful as they are witty, and the

cast is led by the ENO's very own prima donna, Lesley Garrett, as the resourceful fox-lady of the title. Stephen Barlow conducts. Coliseum, St Martin's Lane, London WC2 (0171-836 3161), tonight, Thurs 2, 7.30pm. ☞

DER ROSENKAVALIER: Last chance to catch the Royal Opera's ludicrous revival of Strauss's comedy of bedroom manners — Viennese hot chocolate, but dark in hue and with a sharp tang to it. The conductor Andrew Davis ensures there's plenty of whipped cream on top to help to ease it down, and there's a first-class cast: Anna Tomowa-Sintow in one of her all-too-rare appearances here as the Marschallin, Ann Murray as Octavian, and the enormously experienced Kurt Moll as fall-guy Ochs — plus Barbara Bonney, the steadfast Sophie throughout the run. Royal Opera House, Bow St, London WC2 (0171-304 4000), Mon 27, Wed 1, Fri 3, 6.30pm. ☞

GALLERIES

Richard Cork

COX AND GABO: An enjoyable and unexpected double bill at Leeds, where Stephen Cox's sculpture is twinned with the carvings of Naum Gabo. Cox occupies the Henry Moore Institute, where his show begins with some seldom-displayed plasterboard reliefs from the 1970s. Their minimal austerity holds up well, and contrasts dramatically with the richness of the recent carvings. The most commanding is *Interior Space*, a great chamber ideally suited to its display in the grandest white room at the institute. Hewn from an Egyptian quarry once used by the Pharaohs, it challenges the visitor to squeeze through the narrow entrance slit and explore the darkness within. Gabo's show, across

the bridge in Leeds City Art Gallery, is more modest in size but equally illuminating. Though best-known for his pioneering use of new materials such as perspex, the great Russian innovator also made a number of stone carvings. Sometimes they are combined with brass or nylon, but the overall mood of the show is dominated by Gabo's love of sandstone, slate, marble and alabaster. He comes close to the concern of Moore and Hepworth, whom he befriended during his period in England between 1936 and 1946. A quiet revelation. Henry Moore Institute and Leeds City Art Gallery (0113 346 9469) until May 6.

CARAVAGGIO REVEALED: The most exciting old master discovery of recent years has arrived at the National Gallery. Caravaggio's *The Taking Of Christ*, for decades unrecognised in a Dublin Jesuit community house, was detected by the restorer Sergio Benedetti. Now lent to London by the National Gallery of Ireland, it shows the artist at his most darkly dramatic. Christ's seizure by the soldiers is conveyed as arrestingly as Judas's kiss, pressed against the cheek of man who recoils in rigidly controlled anguish. Three other Caravaggio paintings flesh out an unmissable mini-exhibition. National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, London WC2 (0171-339 3321) until March 26.

ROCK

David Sinclair

THE ARTIST FORMERLY KNOWN AS PRINCE: Like George Michael, TAFKAP has become embroiled in a bitter dispute with his record company. But whereas Michael has withdrawn his labour, TAFKAP has flooded his label with recordings,

vowing to stay on tour until it releases his latest album, *The Gold Experience*. At his new dates, TAFKAP will show his latest toy, a device called an endorphine machine, said to "represent" male and female genitalia. A nation holds its breath. Wembley Arena, London (0181-900 1234), March 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 21, 22, G-Mex, Manchester (0161-522 9000), March 10, 11, SECC, Glasgow (0141-245 9999), March 13, 14, Sheffield Arena (01742 565656), March 16, 17, NEC, Birmingham (021-750 4133), March 18, 19, Point Depot, Dublin (0103531 263633), March 29, 30.



TAFKAP: prince of protest

FAITH NO MORE: To die in with the release on March 13 of a new album, *King For A Day... Fool For A Lifetime*, alternative-metal headcases Faith No More from San Francisco undertake a series of "low-key" music shows, although one would hesitate to apply such a term to their hyperactively heavy-weight music. Led by the ever-greening vocalist Mike Patton ("Sometimes a good way to make music is to treat it like revenge"), the band levitates its bullet-hard riffs with touches of funk, country and jazz. Pyramid Centre, Portsmouth (01705 826666), March 2, Road-

meader, Northampton (01604 21408), March 4; UEA, Norwich (01603 505401), March 5; Garage, Glasgow (0141-332 1120), March 10; Manchester University (0161-275 2930), March 11; Forum, London NW5 (0171-284 2200), March 13.

THEATRE

Benedict Nightingale

BROKEN GLASS: A deserved transfer from the National for Arthur Miller's latest, with Henry Goodman at his most emotionally incisive as a New York Jew trying to sustain hope and self-respect in a world invaded by news of Nazi atrocities in 1930s Germany. Duke of York's, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (0171-836 5122), Evenings, Mon to Sat at 7.45pm; matinees, Wed and Sat at 3pm.

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR: Is Ford, the merchant who suspects his wife is being bedded by Falstaff, an Othello whose tale ends happily? Terry Hands does not quite succeed in proving that; but, with Denis Quilley as a notably genial fat knight, his is a warm, intelligent production of Shakespeare's most underrated comedy. Olivier, National Theatre, South Bank, SE1 (0171-928 2252), Evenings, Mon February 27 to Sat March 4 at 7.15pm; matinees, Thurs March 2 and Sat March 4 at 2pm. Continues in repertoire.

FILMS

Geoff Brown

NATURAL BORN KILLERS (15): Duck for cover: Oliver Stone is back with his most ferocious assault yet on the audience's eyes and ears. Our brains are only partly involved in this tale of two warped souls who go on a killing spree, and are turned into celebrities by tabloid TV. Stone satirises the media (an easy target) with an iron fist: though you must admire the cheek of someone who takes big Hollywood money and produces a visual bombardment unprecedented in a mainstream film. The actors have much to compete with, but in the midst of the frenzy Woody Harrelson and Juliette Lewis manage intense performances as the demon lovers who notch up 52 corpses, or thereabouts, in a few crazy weeks. Clapham Picture House (0171-498 3323) Gate 5 (0171-727 4043) MGM Chelsea (0171-352 5096) Odeons Kensington (01426 914666) Swiss Cottage (01426 914098) West End (01426 915574) Screen/Baker Street (0171-935 2772) UCI Whiteleys (0171-792 3332).

QUIZ SHOW (15): Robert Redford, wearing his director's cap, resurrects an episode in 1950s America, when the TV quiz show *Twenty One* was rocked by scandal. A disgruntled Jew (John Turturro) takes revenge on the monied, handsome WASP (Ralph Fiennes) who replaces him as champion. Redford is fighting a battle already lost when he bemoans the ascent of TV culture, but his elegy for civilised values is sustained by an amusing script and a raft of brilliant performances. A pleasure to see Paul Scofield on screen again as Fiennes's father, the literary luminary Mark Van Doren. Barbican (0171-638 8891) MGM Chelsea (0171-352 5096) Odeons Haymarket (01426 915353) Kensington (01426 914666) Swiss Cottage (01426 914098) Screen/Hill (0171-435 3366) UCI Whiteleys (0171-792 3332) Warner (0171-437 4343).

DANCE

John Percival

BEJART BALLET: Guest stars Sylvie Guillem and Laurent Hilaire feature in the opening gala (next Tuesday) of Maurice Bejart's brief London season. They dance *Episodes*, a dramatic piece he made especially for them. Also, that night only, is *Suite Vienneise*, plus the London premiere of *Journal: First Chapter*. This last recurs on a Stravinsky programme (March 2 and 4) with one of Bejart's most celebrated works, *Firebird*, and the *Three Pieces for Violin*. Bejart calls the programme on Wednesday 1 and Friday 3 *The Art of Pas de Deux*: an assemblage of dramatic duets. Sadler's Wells Theatre, Rosebery Avenue, London EC1 (0171-278 8916), 7.30pm.

CLASSICS RESTAGED: Two company directors present their interpretations of famous old works. Scottish Ballet premiers Galina Samsova's version of *Swan Lake* in Glasgow on Thursday 2 (followed by a tour to Edinburgh, Woking, Inverness, Aberdeen, Newcastle, Hull and Belfast). Peter Wright's new production of *Coppelia* for Birmingham Royal Ballet previews on Thursday, opens on Friday 3, and will go later to Bradford, Sunderland, Liverpool and Covent Garden. Theatre Royal, Hope Street, Glasgow (0141-332 9000), March 2-18 except Sundays, 7.15pm, matinees Sat at 2.15 and Thur 9, 16, 1.30pm. Birmingham Hippodrome, Hurst Street, Birmingham (0121-622 7486) March 2-4 and 6-8 at 7.30, matinees Sat at 2.30, Tues at 2pm.

CHILDREN

LONDON

Tropical tales: Lively Afro-Caribbean tales from the Cassava Leaf Storytellers. London Transport Museum, Covent Garden, WC2 (0171-379 6344). Today 11am. Adults £3.95 (incl. museum admission); over-fives £2.50, under-fives free. Family ticket £10. ☞

Spring Stampex: The British Philatelic Exhibition. Royal Horticultural Halls, Greycoat Street and Vincent Square, SW1 (0171-490 1005). Starts Tues, noon-7pm, and continues until March 5. Adults and children £3 (first day); subsequent days adults £1.50, children 75p. ☞

BEDFORDSHIRE

How to recycle: Environmentalists show how to re-use things. Visitor Centre, Priory Country Park, Bedford (01234 364213). Tomorrow at 2.30pm. Children 50p. ☞

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Wood walking: Learn about a wood through the centuries on this nature walk. For eight-year-olds upwards accompanied by adults. Brampton Wood, near Grafton (01480 812600). Today at 10am (ends noon), free. No disabled facilities.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Attract birds to your garden: Royal Society for the Protection of Birds workshop. For four-year-olds upwards accompanied by adults. Meet at the RSPB Highnam Woods reserve car park near Gloucester (01594 562852). Free. ☞

HAMPSHIRE

Fair Play is the title of Martin the Puppet Man's show. The Tower, Romsey Road, Winchester (01962 869586). Tomorrow, 2pm. Adults £4, children £3. Family of four £12. ☞

ISLE OF WIGHT

Wax facts: The Romans, Henry VIII and the Chamber of Horrors are some of the attractions at the Wax Museum at Brading. High Street, Brading (01983 407286). Open daily from 10am-5pm. Adults £2.75, children £4.25. Limited facilities for the disabled.

OXFORDSHIRE

They Are Back: Television's Borrowers on stage with the SNAP Theatre Company. For five-year-olds upwards. The Theatre, Chipping Norton (01608 642350). Starts Monday at 6pm, ends Tues (1pm and 6pm). Adults and children from £4.50. ☞

SCOTLAND

History of shipbuilding: Maritime Museum, Aberdeen (01224 585788). Mon-Sat 10am-4pm, free. ☞

WALES

Taking up Judo? Then get some inspiration from spectating at the Judo Welsh Youth Open championships. Welsh Institute of Sport, Sophia Gardens, Cardiff (01222 397571). Today at 10am. Adults £2, children £1. ☞

WARWICKSHIRE

Return to the Forbidden Planet: Shakespeare set to rock 'n' roll — the 1995 tour starts this weekend. Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Waterside, Stratford (01799 295623). today at 2.30pm and 7.30pm. Adults and children from £8. ☞

YORKSHIRE

Enter a Children's Poetry Competition at the "Railways in Literature" exhibition, showing how trains feature in



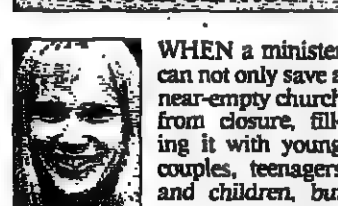
On line for children

classics such as *Wind in the Willows*. National Railway Museum, York (01904 621261). Today 10am-6pm and tomorrow 11am-6pm. Continues to April 25. Adults £4.20, under-fives free, over-fives £2.10. ☞

JANE BIDDER

In Chipping Campden, Ruth Gledhill attends a charismatic Baptist church

AT YOUR SERVICE



WHEN a minister can not only save a near-empty church from closure, filling it with young couples, teenagers and children, but can also persuade these same middle-England churchgoers to rock to gospel songs and "speak in tongues", it suggests there might be hope for Christianity in Britain yet.

About 15 years ago, Chipping Campden Baptist church, an unremarkable building in the heart of a remarkably pretty town, was on the brink of closure. A handful of older members, however, refused to accept the inevitable, and prayed almost continuously for the church to be saved. Gradually, young families moved into the area and began attending church, and Howard Jones, a student at Regent's College, Oxford, began to preach and lead services there. Two neighbouring chapels at Blockley and Paxford closed and were sold. The money was given to Chipping Campden, which enabled the congregation to invite Mr Jones to become their full-time minister. The church is now one of Britain's fastest-growing Baptist churches.

I arrived early but the only pew left was at the back, where I sat with the few others aged 35 or more. "We are here to praise God, worship him and give our hearts to him afresh," said Mr Jones, a lively minister in his mid-thirties, who was formerly a member of a Christian rock band. His simultaneous fluency with the guitar, sermon and liturgy made him seem at times the ecclesiastical equivalent of a one-man band, although others did take turns to



The Rev Howard Jones: an ecclesiastical one-man band

lead parts of the service, in particular the prayers.

"Lord, it is not because of our wisdom or wonderful way of living that we are here," said Mr Jones. "It is not because we are specially good. It is because you loved us and gave us your son. Lord, you have loved us. You still do love us with such a passion." We sang "happy birthday" to three members of the congregation, including the minister's wife Iona, before Mr Jones introduced us to the song: "You are love, you are life, you are Lord of everything." We prayed for the five church members on missionary projects in England and abroad, for the Government, for peace in Northern Ireland and for the game of football.

After communion, when he broke a large loaf of bread into small pieces for us to share, Mr Jones preached on St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, when the apostle said it was preferable to

I have heard glossolalia in other charismatic churches. It comes across as a kind of incoherent, high-pitched babbling noise. Deciding that it would be preferable to engage my mind before attempting to talk to God, that my life was overflowing with gifts already, and that in any case it was difficult enough to make sense in English, I babbled a few incoherent excuses and left.

Chipping Campden Baptist Church, Market Place, Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire. 01366 840720

PASTOR: The Rev Howard Jones

SERMON: Gifted interpretation of some of St Paul's less comprehensible statements. ★★

ARCHITECTURE: Built in 1872, an artless protestation of plainness against the well-managed beauty of the town. Small building with gallery, easily filled by the congregation of 80-plus. ★★

MUSIC: One traditional hymn, then some lively Christian worship songs. ★★

LITURGY: Words for communion celebration taken direct from Corinthians; otherwise service ad-libbed around structure of songs, prayers, with the sermon at the end. ★

AFTER-SERVICE CARE: All who wanted to receive the "gift of the spirit" and start speaking in tongues were invited to be prayed over. Others could partake of tea or coffee. ★★

SPIRITUAL HIGH: My spirit refused obstinately to receive the proffered gift of tongues. ★

COVER STORY

3

Continued from page 1
been said that between 500 and 1,000 garden plants are lost each year.

As the number of Mr Harwood's daffodils increased, it became obvious that there was insufficient room in his garden, so an acre of ground was found a few miles away, on an old nursery garden, where the collection could expand unhindered.

At home it had never been ideal having most of the garden given over to daffodils. Mr Harwood explains that he likes to leave the daffodil leaves to die down for at least six weeks after flowering, to build up the bulbs for next season, and that it had not made the most exciting of views from the kitchen window. "Some daffodils — the jonquil and tazetta types — want a summer baking, but the trumpet types like it cool and moist, so we used to plant courgettes over them when the leaves had gone, to provide shade. We had a lot of courgettes."

He took to breeding daffodils, making his own crosses from promising parents and then patiently waiting for five years — from seed to first flower — before he could see the results.

Today his sons are beginning to catch the bug. They enjoy helping to hand-pollinate the flowers for the breeding programme, and willingly travel to shows where Mr Harwood is judging, and not just because the tea ladies always ply them with dozens of sticky cakes. The elder boy is developing an eye for a daffodil and can tell a promising one from the rubbish: "I wouldn't breed from a female like that," he said thoughtfully, looking at a new hybrid.

The boys' interest pleases Mr Harwood, although he ruefully points out that both their birthdays come close together in the busy season, March and May. Mr Harwood reckons he was spending 40 hours a week on his daffodils at the peak times of year. Between September and November he was busy planting, lifting and dividing bulbs. From March to May, the flowering season, he was hand-pollinating his plants, showing and judging, and travelling around the country to see possible new additions to the collection.

He began before breakfast, was outdoors all evening and most of the weekend. At the quiet times of year, the work reduced to perhaps 20 hours a week: researching varieties, keeping his records up to date, and answering volumes of daffodil correspondence. Holidays were to places such as the Isles of Scilly, where he could do a bit of out-of-season bulb hunting.

usi00 For him, 1991 was a bad year. It was time to be lifting and sorting the bulbs. (He does this on a four-year rotation, rather than all in one year, as the collection contains in the region of 100,000 individual bulbs.) One thousand, three hundred varieties were standing dry in the garden shed ready to be split, replanted or treated for pests. Then, while Mr Harwood was waiting in a traffic queue on a motorway, another car sailed into the back of his car, wrecking it and fracturing his spine.

As a result of his accident he has been pensioned off and is now a full-time daffodil man, still far from comfortable after the accident, but able to continue, and keen as ever. For three years, work on the house has halted; it is habitable but far from finished. Progress with the daffodils has been better, and he has managed to replace two-thirds of the varieties which perished in the shed.

He has to kneel to plant now, which is a big frustration. "I spend my life telling people to plant their daffodils deeper, down to a foot at least, so they go on flowering after the first couple of years, and now I am finding it difficult to put them deep myself."

Bulbs are everywhere in the garden. The greenhouse is knee-deep in bulbs waiting to be planted, and the walls are

Cover illustration:
MARY EVANS
PICTURE LIBRARY

Feature photographs:
MITCH JENKINS



'Atlas Gold'

Fact file

- Martin Harwood's narcissi list can be obtained by writing to him (enclosing an SAE) at: Hope Cottage, Halebourne Lane, Chobham, Surrey, GU24 8SL.
- Copies of *The National Plant Collections Directory 1995* are available from the NCCPG, The Pines, Wisley Garden, Woking, Surrey GU24 0QB (£3.50, including p&p).
- Information about the Daffodil Society is available from The Secretary (Don Barnes), 32 Montgomery Avenue, Sheffield S7 1NZ.
- *Thyme in the Garden* is available from Hexham Herbs, Chatterford, Hexham, Northumberland (£2.50, including p&p).
- Roy Stephenson's new monograph *Sedum* by the Timber Press is available through bookshops (£37.50).

racked with trays of miniature varieties such as the hoop-petioled *Narcissus bulbocodium* and pots of fragrant 'Paper White', hurriedly lifted in to escape an overnight frost. When you open the door the perfume hits you like steam from a pressure cooker.

Under the kitchen window are beds of recent acquisitions, which Mr Harwood was able to manage while convalescing. But what's this? Something other than daffodils and courgettes? I spot some drum-headed alliums and several species of hellebore. The beginnings of some new collections perhaps? "Well I shall certainly be starting to breed

alliums, and tulips, too," Mr Harwood said. "But the daffodils won't suffer. I'll do both."

Mrs Harwood works at the local playgroup, and Mr Harwood insists, is a willing partner in his daffodil-driven life. It could hardly be otherwise. But the Greek myth of Narcissus provides a cautionary lesson: it was punishment for scorning the love of a maiden which caused the sweet youth Narcissus to develop the hots for his own reflection and to die of frustration. Thereafter, for mythological reasons, he was turned into a daffodil. Some bulb.

Mr Harwood does not care to pay more than £5 for a new bulb. The newest, most desirable varieties can fetch anything from £25 to £75 a bulb from specialist nurseries, but after a few years they come down to sane prices, and then disappear — from the nurseries at least. Naturally, no nurseryman is going to waste time on a field of bulbs worth £5 each when he could be getting £75. And so the varieties come and go.

Mr Harwood waves a well-used paperback several inches thick, the Royal Horticultural Society's Daffodil Register. "There are 25,000 names in here, and 300 new ones are registered every year," he says. The viscera stir at the thought of the British Isles disappearing under a custard of mounting yellow, and Wordsworth becoming a dirty word among the conservation lobby.

How much does he spend on bulbs a year? He hedges. "Well, it depends how much there is to spare that year." It is clearly a significant sum: running a collection as seriously as this must cost a few thousand a year, not counting time, but including office expenses, telephone calls, daily travel to the nursery ground, trips to track down plants and to specialist libraries: pots, labels, recording systems, pest control (including feeding the cat which consumes the mice and rabbits), and finally the bulbs themselves. National Collection holders, it must be said, do it for love.

Anyone can be a collection holder. And anyone can have a collection of any flowering plant. Most collections are far smaller than Mr Harwood's and the demands on space and money correspondingly smaller. What is needed is a passion for the plant. Not even a passion for gardening: simply a passion for one plant and the urge to collect it in all its various forms. This done, the collection can be registered with the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens at Wisley, Surrey, once it has been approved by the NCCPG's committee of eminent horticulturists.



Martin Harwood and his nine-year-old son, Graeme, check some of the many hundreds of daffodil varieties at their home

In Northumberland, Ray Stephenson, a teacher, has the National Collection of *Sedum* (stonecrops) in a thousand and one pots in his back yard. The Prince of Wales, the NCCPG's patron, has 57 cultivars of beech tree at Highgrove in Gloucestershire. The National Thyme Collection is held by Kevin and Susie White at their nursery in Hexham, Northumberland, and they, like a growing number of collection holders, have published definitive literature on their pet subject, through the NCCPG.



'The Usurper'

Some collection holders specialise in the wild species only. They aim to grow all those that will survive in our

climate, and it is a great service they do for the international conservation movement, not just for Britain. There are plants today which are extinct in their natural

habitat but which still exist in British gardens. *Cosmos atrosanguineus* is one: that maroon, chocolate-scented dahlia lookalike which is so fashionable at the moment. Collecting man-made ornamental hybrids is another matter altogether. By comparison, it is almost a dilettante occupation. It receives none of the kudos that goes with nature conservation. It has no moral worthiness. Even the hybridisation of food crops has been for profitability or disease-resistance, but the hybridisation of garden plants has only ever been for sheer pleasure.

Collecting hybrids preserves a wonderful working

palette of plants for gardeners. It is art history at its sharpest end. From a collection like Mr Harwood's you can look back at, say, early 19th-century daffodils, just as you would a swatch of wallpaper or old fabrics, choosing plants which appeal for their own sake or to recreate a period garden.

You can see in his collection the 18th-century double daffodils such as 'Lemon Phoenix', or the modern hybrids coming out of Holland today, with flowers the size of your hand on short stems. You can smell the truly rose-like perfume from the new flowers of *Narcissus* 'Sweet Charity', or stand amazed at the new split-

corona daffodils, whose trumpet is split backwards against the petals to form a glamorous, very un-daffodil-like face.

And if there are too many to choose from, Mr Harwood is always there when his collection has an Open Weekend, to pass on his advice and enthusiasm. He despairs at the lack of choice offered by garden centres and even bulb merchants. "All 'Carlton' and 'Ice Follies' by the sack," he says. "Look at 'Dallas' or 'Cushendall'. There's style for you: perfect white on white, the shallowest of cups, and a green eye. The greens are definitely coming in. A judge at one of the shows begged some 'Dallas' from me last year and it broke my heart to agree." But he did.

As a collection holder he does grow those varieties he hates. "But only five each of those, mind you. I might have



'Constantinople'

hundreds of my favourites, like 'Cloud Nine'. It really glows, even from a distance."

His queen of daffs is the variety 'Avalanche'. There is a great block of them by his back door, where he can get the full benefit of the perfume, and the bulbs can get the necessary summer baking. It is tall, with 14 white, yellow-centred flowers on each stem, and the perfume is ravishing.

The future of his collection? "Well, I have daffodils in flower from December under glass to June outdoors. But I can buy bulbs from New Zealand to plant in March and get into flower for July and August. Their internal clock takes a season to re-adjust to this hemisphere. I also keep back in cold storage some of my own bulbs, which I put up later to target specific summer shows."

There are always old varieties waiting around the corner to be collected. A few years ago he came across a nursery which used to specialise in new daffodils in the 1930s. "All gone now, Guv," he was told, "but there's a few left in the hedge bottoms." The field had been grubbed up but, at the end of every row, many plants had survived, flowering deep among the hedge roots.

Mr Harwood does not worry about what will happen to the collection in, say, 30 years. He is too busy expanding it. The saving of collections, the passing on of the baton, is a job which the NCCPG sees as one of its more important duties. The organisation refers to itself with the ghastly phrase "networked living germplasm repository". It sounds like something you might see written on an Organ Donor Card. But that is its role: to step in where there is an emergency, and to help to coordinate the communal to safe hands of a great collection.

There are more than 600 National Collections in Britain, and the work put into them is tremendous. But saving the plants is almost the easy part. Keeping them permanently saved is another matter. Who else would step in to give his life to daffodils, and enjoy every minute of it? What public institution would wish to afford it? Where do you find that kind of commitment?

Buy a daffodil on St David's Day, next Wednesday, and think of Martin Harwood. Just be careful when you bend to sniff the perfume that it is not the beginning of something much, much bigger.

Patricia Morison on the painter Poussin, Ovid and the inspiration behind Flora's garden

A living picture garden

FOR THE essence of spring in the garden, go to Piccadilly in the very centre of London. *The Kingdom of Flora* is a ravishingly beautiful painting in the Royal Academy's exhibition, "Nicholas Poussin". The goddess Flora dances in a robe the colour of young beech-leaves. Apollo drives his sun-chariot across the sky. A statue of Priapus, the phallic god of gardens, stands beside garlanded trees.

What, I wondered, would it take to plant a kingdom of Flora — possibly minus Priapus, who might alarm the neighbours.

At first it seemed easy. Poussin has painted all the characters transformed into flowers in the *Metamorphosis*, the celebrated poem by the first-century Roman poet Ovid. Beautiful Narcissus is shown gazing at his reflection. In his hand is the flower he became after he died of self-love. So in my garden of Flora, I would plant *Narcissus tazetta*, white with a yellow centre, just as Ovid described.

Then the problems begin. Do I want my garden true to Ovid, or true to Poussin? Take the carnation springing from the blood of Ajax who fell on his sword in a fit of rage. Now, Ovid tells his readers that Ajax was turned into the same flower as the dead Hyacinth. On a hyacinth's petals are inscribed the words *Al Al*, explained Ovid. I represented Apollo's cry of grief as

he tried to revive his lover. Hyacinth, whom he had slain in a discus accident, and the letters are also the first of Ajax's name.

Why did Poussin fail to be true to Ovid in this?

Even choosing the correct hyacinth is not straightforward. Poussin shows blue flowers which could be bluebells, or a cultivated form of *Hyacinth orientalis*, bred by the Ottoman Turks. But that is not what Ovid meant by his bright purple bloom shaped like a lily and marked *Al*.

Classical scholars have many suggestions for the Ovidian hyacinth, such as *asphodel*, *iris*, *gladiolus*, *italicus*, wild larkspur, and *Lilium chalcedonicum*.

For Ovid, the fragile wild anemone was the flower sacred to Adonis, Venus's lover who was gored by a boar. Poussin shows them as mauve, whereas I would prefer blood-red *Anemone coronaria* in



Poussin's *The Kingdom of Flora*, at the Royal Academy

my garden. Crocus is easy, he wears a wreath of blue and white crocuses in the picture but his languorous girlfriend, *Smilax*, is a real problem. Poussin shows her holding greater bindweed, which only a lunatic would turn loose in a garden.

Fortunately, I have another choice, especially as Ovid tells us nothing more about the lovers except that they were turned into

angel. They don't resemble the huge, coarse sunflower in Van Dyck's self-portrait of 1633. *Helianthus annuus* was brought from America to Spain in 1509 and spread slowly into up-market gardens. Poussin, surely would not have risked making his botanically aware patrons snigger by including a New World exotic in his supposedly Roman garden.

The plot thickens if we ask what

Ovid meant. He made up the story about Clytie, driven mad with desire for Apollo and turned into a plant, which he never names, though he describes pale leaves, violet petals, and a habit of turning towards the sun. Later Roman writers assumed Ovid meant heliotrope but, what did they mean by heliotrope? They did not mean our annual heliotrope or "Cherry Pie", discovered in Peru in the 18th century. It seems that for my Ovidian garden, I could plant violets, wild mallow, wild chicory or *Heliotropium europaeum*, a small-flowered, lilac-white creeping annual.

According to my theory, Poussin duly filled Clytie's basket with another flower famous in Renaissance literature for "following the sun": the humble pot marigold.

I find myself disagreeing again with the art historians when they say that Flora's people have the melancholy look of dying mortals. Poussin knew well the perils of love, say scholars, who claim he painted this picture after recovering from syphilis. But in *The Kingdom of Flora* he captures the very essence of spring — joy and sensuality. It is a wonderfully happy picture.

● "Nicholas Poussin" is at the Royal Academy, Piccadilly, London W1 until April 9 (0171 439 7438). The catalogue, published by the Royal Academy with Zwemmer, costs £21.50 (£9.50 in hardback).

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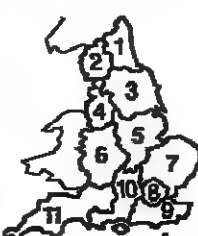
weekend away helps you shirk, rest and play.

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ARTS

A friend has been painfully afflicted by "I Want To Be An Actor" Syndrome — or *thespitis luvvis*, as the doctors call it. First he gave up his teaching job to follow his heart's desire. Then he spent most of his life-savings, and some of mine, on acting lessons. After that he blew the rest on a hospital operation to reshape his ears, since he was assured by those "in the biz" that Mr Tarantino and Mr Spielberg would never contemplate casting anybody whose lugholes were less than lustrous.

Naturally I advised against this drastic assignation with the surgeon's knife. To my untutored eye the offending ears, though protruding marginally more than the norm, seemed perfectly acceptable. But when challenged to name a character in *Reservoir Dogs* or *Jurassic Park* who had distinctive ears (excluding dogs or dinosaurs, of course) I had to admit that he might have a point.

A few weeks later he came to me with a thick prospectus. "Read this," he exclaimed. His newly-restructured lobes were fair shaking with excitement, or per-

Darling, would you be an angel?

haps the plastic was still drying. "It will make you rich! You'd be a mug to ignore it."

It turned out to be a document extolling the virtues of a Shakespeare production that would be staged like a Broadway musical, replete with Thirties songs and dances. It would tour to ecstatic audiences all over Britain, and then conquer the world. At least, it would if I — and several dozen other "enlightened" individuals — stumped up the necessary wherewithal (I think "shares" were fixed at £500 each) that would enable cast and director to begin rehearsals for their sure-fire hit. In short, I was being asked to become an "angel".

The document even included impressive-looking graphs and statistical analyses. To my friend, at least, these impenetrable columns of figures proved that the production was critic-proof, recession-proof and virtually certain to make us all stinking rich.

Well, call me a mug if you like, but something horribly timid and tight-fisted deep inside my psyche stopped me from handing over 500 hard-earned reedies, there and then. And I never heard any more about the Shakespeare production. But a large advertisement in the national press last weekend has brought the whole episode back into my mind. It is headed "Your Chance to Play a Part in British Film History", and a curious feeling of *déjà vu* comes over me as I read it.

This time the required investment is £1,000, and instead of an all-singing Shakespeare production the project is an epic film about Scotland's warrior king, Robert the Bruce. Investors are, of course, promised "a share in any profits" — a phrase that seems unnecessarily cautious. How could there not be profits? After all, *Four Weddings and the Battle of Bannockburn* (I jest: the film will actually be called *The Bruce*) will



RICHARD MORRISON

business works from the inside". So you pay £1,000. You take unpaid leave from your job for several weeks. You run around holding a pike in a muddy field while Brian Blessed bellows "Kill the Scots rebels!" in his specially straining voice. You let Wolf from TV's *Gladiators* charge at you on a horse, flailing with a mace as he goes. And of course you enjoy at first hand the wit and wisdom of Oliver Reed, provided that he is still enthusiastic about the project. Finally, the director says to you: "Well done, loves, I wish I could pay you, but don't forget that you share in any profits."

Enticing? Well, yes, I must admit that I do find it curiously tempting. After all, £1,000 is a small price to pay for being immortalised on the same celluloid as Oliver Reed. And of course my £1,000 could make all the difference to the British film industry in its heroic struggle to compete with the Costners and Spielbergs.

Anyway, I am more susceptible to thespian pipe-dreams these days — ever since I discovered that my actor friend was right all along. No sooner did he start auditioning with his new, shapely ears than one of Britain's top young directors cast him in a play that has since taken him round the world. Do you think that I should have a little nip and tuck before engaging Wolf from TV's *Gladiators* in mortal combat?

Now to this week's quiz, which concerns the demure American chanteuse Madonna. The question you have to answer is: why did she turn up at the Brits Awards in Alexandra Palace this week, having snubbed them three years ago? Is it because:

a) the Brits are now the most prestigious music awards the world has ever known, and a must-attend for every superstar?

b) Madonna is a connoisseur of mid-Victorian architecture?

c) she was in north London anyway to be interviewed for the manager's job at Arsenal?

d) she has become so concerned about being perceived as a *passé* Eighties icon that she might open a carpet showroom in Romford if the local newspaper guaranteed a front-page picture?

It isn't for me to advise on the correct answer. But I did feel sorry for the figure who paraded in front of the callous "taste-makers" of the pop industry on Monday in a blonde wig apparently tailored for a kangaroo. She suddenly seemed as irrelevant as a used bus ticket.

All those gushing colour-supplement articles a few years ago about her "controlling every aspect of her image" were so persuasive that she must have started to believe in the immortality of her own fame. Alas, she is perhaps now beginning to realise that nearly all pop careers — like all political careers — are destined to decline into failure.

So what can a Material Girl do? Well, if she would care to forward £1,000, I can probably arrange a small but interesting part in a new movie with Oliver Reed...

The RSC takes its productions from Tiverton sports halls to Tokyo theatres. Andy Lavender reports

The Bard from A to B

You cannot get to the theatre easily? Then have the theatre come to you. Why not ask the Royal Shakespeare Company, for instance, to drop in to your local leisure centre? This is not as whimsical as it sounds. "Outreach" has long been a buzzword among the theatre companies, and the RSC is reaching out more wholeheartedly than most. Its annual regional tour takes not only a Shakespeare play to the people, but the stage, seating and lights as well. Everything, in fact, to mount a full-scale production somewhere as seemingly theatre-resistant as, say, a sports hall.

The RSC and Manchester's Royal Exchange are the only building-based companies able to go on the road in this manner. But while the latter is cash-strapped, the RSC tours the country. Katie Mitchell's production of Shakespeare's *Henry VI*, which opened last July at the Other Place in Stratford, has been on the road this season. By the time it returns from Germany in May it will have completed the largest tour ever undertaken by the RSC, reaching venues as diverse as the renowned Piccolo Theatre in Milan and the somewhat less renowned Biggleswade Recreation Centre in Northamptonshire.

The company recently made another of these peculiar leaps of place and culture. Earlier this month it finished a short

run in the sports hall of Tiverton High School in Devon. Then it moved across the world to the Globe Theatre in Tokyo.

To make continent-hopping a little easier, the production has four sets (all exactly the same) in different parts of the world. "All we need is a hall and an electricity supply and we bring everything else," says Jasper Gilbert, the tour manager. Like the best delegators, Gilbert recruits help where he can find it. Local people are always keen to get involved, he says, and in any case, one of the company's contractual requirements is for 14 able-bodied volunteers.

A band of novices taking apart a theatre set sounds like a recipe for chaos, but Gilbert's technicians marshal their helpers with affable efficiency. They have to, for the timetable allows no room for error. A typical week in England, for instance, begins with the get-in on Monday afternoon. The lights are rigged at 5pm, then the team works until 11pm constructing the set and installing the plastic seating. Everything is made safe and tidy the following morning, which leaves the afternoon to focus the lights, ready for the first performance. This might seem like "rough theatre", but Gilbert stresses his priority: to create an authentic theatre environment.

"You have to be able to dominate the space," he says. "The idea is that we're creating a real theatre feeling and trying to give the acting company as much of an infrastructure around them as we can."

And what an infrastructure. There is a fully computerised lighting desk operating 120 lamps. The sound is played through a digital system ("the highest quality possible"), and there are special-effects machines for the production's flutters of snow and mist. The dimensions of stage and set are obviously fixed, but Gilbert unpacks his drawing board once a week to design the most appropriate seating configuration for the next venue. In Tiverton, for instance, he constructed a three-sided auditorium with a seating capacity of 457. The maximum at his disposal is 646. "We're always trying to maintain the same relationship between the audience and the production, so that what you see is the same show you'd see in Stratford, not a substandard version," he explains.

Mitchell caught up with the production in Devon on a Friday and gave the cast notes on Saturday. The burghers of Tiverton responded warmly to the performance that evening. Then, even before the last of them had left, everything was being dismantled. Some of the actors lent a hand before driving back to London — Edward IV one minute, set-



The RSC on the road: "All we need is a hall and electricity," says its tour manager

shifter the next. The technicians finished at 5am; the lighting equipment was checked in at Heathrow at 9am, destination Tokyo.

The tour is both evangelism for Shakespeare and self-promotion by the RSC. In England, it spreads the Bardic word to parts of the country

which do not have their own theatre, and it is accompanied by an extensive educational package. It operates on a commercial basis — the RSC is booked by a range of local councils and promoters — but there are many ways to measure value for money.

"We lose financially putting

on the show," says Neil Harrison, leisure services officer for Mid-Devon District Council, "but there are 450 people coming to Tiverton every night, putting money back into the local economy. And in terms of kudos for the local authority, what could be better than having the RSC?"

GREAT BRITISH HOPE

Rising stars in the arts firmament

JUDE LAW

Profession: Actor
Age: 22



Where can he be found? Largely in the Club Class lounge of British Airways, at least until March 8. Last weekend he flew to New York to start rehearsals for the Broadway production of Jean Cocteau's *Les Parents Terribles*, repeating his acclaimed National Theatre performance as the boy, Michael, whose girlfriend happens to have been the mistress of his father. But he has seven more performances to go in the starring role of Euripides's *Ion* at the RSC's Pit, which means New York producers will be flying him back and forth so he can fulfil both commitments.

Sounds pretty exhausting. "I don't think my body clock will get too disturbed," he says, aware that it is the sort of problem most actors dream of. "I'm not complaining."

And as for skipping out on *Ion*? Out of the question. "I wouldn't be crazy about anyone else playing that part."

His speciality? It seems to be young men with complicated umbilical ties to Mum. "Tell me about it," he laughs. Not that his own family life sounds terribly fraught. He and sister Natasha grew up in Lee Green in southeast London, the children of teachers. "They were just very cool parents, who encouraged us to do something we enjoyed."

What preceded the Cocteau-Euripides double-header? He spent 14 months between 16 and 17 playing "a Mancunian tearaway in true soap style" in the Granada series *Families*. His subsequent London stage debut was as Fox Trot Darling in Philip Ridley's Hampstead Theatre play, *The Fastest Clock in the Universe*. Ridley, Law says, "is a big hero of mine". The casting director of the film *Shopping* saw Law in the play and a film career was born.

But *Shopping* was a flop, wasn't it? "It got far too much press coverage for a first-time film and never really did much business. But it did launch Sean Pertwee and Sadie Frost and myself in quite a good light." Law plans to reteam with those two in a film, *The Hell Fire Club*, that should start once he finishes his stint in *Les Parents*, or *Indiscretions* as it is now called. He and journalist Alex Fenby have also written a film, *Billie and Brilliant*, based on Britain's female drug culture of the 1920s.

Any parts in it for him? Another laugh: "A juicy cameo."

MATT WOLF

THE SUNDAY TIMES

Amis on Travolta

"He opened the door himself so you walked straight into the icon... By his mid-30s he was simply a human vacuum, lost in Hollywood's interstellar void. Now he is 41, and his career has done something that the industry is hard put to find a vocabulary for. "Comeback" barely covers it. Forget "comeback". This product is flying straight from zero temperature to dignity..."

Martin Amis profiles John Travolta - *The Magazine*, in *The Sunday Times* tomorrow



James Smetham's *The Knight's Bridal 1864*, an oil on panel

Stepping out of the shadows

Shortly after the death of James Smetham in 1889 there was a little flurry of interest. This was partly because the publication of his letters and literary works marked him out as an observer of rare delicacy and verbal precision, and partly because his old friend Dante Gabriel Rossetti was rumoured to have had a hand in his earlier paintings to make them more saleable.

Since then, almost nobody has taken any notice of Smetham. At best he figures among the shadowy attendance to the real grandees of Pre-Raphaelitism. Susan P. Castoras is really the first to consider Smetham in his own right, and her book, *James Smetham: artist, author, Pre-Raphaelite associate*, tells us all we could wish to know of his life and career. Hot on the book's heels comes the first ever retrospective exhibition of his works, fresh from the Yale Center for British art and all too briefly at Christie's.

VISUAL ART: John Russell Taylor on James Smetham

From it, Smetham turns out to be a very interesting artist. Most of the work is not at all as one would expect from the close Pre-Raphaelite connections: if Rossetti did contribute to any of these works, it is not apparent. Though there are moments when Smetham appears to have studied Pre-Raphaelitism practice closely, it is mostly the hard Germanic style of Ford Madox Brown, rather than the luxurious invention of Rossetti or the hallucinatory clarity of early Millais.

Smetham, in fact, seems to belong to an earlier generation altogether: the minor visionaries who grouped round Blake, particularly Edward Calvert. Like Calvert he loves to depict scenes of Miltonic pastoral, and he drifts, in his later oil paintings

at least, into a dreamy vagueness. He never was a brilliant draughtsman, and it is almost with a sigh of relief that he abandons the rule of Ruskin. Around his mid-fifties, he had become convinced that he was never going to achieve worldly success as an artist. He was also drifting increasingly into melancholia and an obsessive religiosity. Among the most astonishing pieces in the show are his microscopic illustrations to the Bible: page after page of thumbnail sketches done either for his own satisfaction or towards a project incapable of achievement. All the same, and despite a touch of inescapable awkwardness, little gems such as *A Pilgrim at Stonehenge* and *Dagon's Dance* distil an otherworldly poetry that is Smetham's alone.

James Smetham is at Christie's, 5 King Street, SW1 Mon-Fri 9am-5pm (Thurs to 8pm), Sun 2-5pm until March 10. Admission is free. James Smetham by Susan P. Castoras (Scolar Press) is £35.

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ARTS

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WEST END ENTERTAINMENT

THEATRE GUIDE

- CELL MATES** Rick Mayall and originally Stephen — but soon to be Simon Ward — play Sean Bourke and George Blake, in Simon Gray's low-key, slightly disappointing play. Abbey, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (0171-359 1700). Mon-Sat, 8pm; mats Wed, 3pm and Sat, 5pm.
- A CHRISTMAS CAROL** John Mortimer's adaptation, Ian Judge's direction and Clive Francis's score make this a cosy evening, well removed from the moral tenor of Dickens. Barbican, Silk Street, EC2 (0171-538 8891). Today, 2pm and 7.15pm.
- THE CLAUDELINE MARRIAGE** Nigel Hawthorne plays the dispirited Lard Pook, and directs a strong cast in the 19th-century comedy about 18th-century greed, snobbery and true love. Queens, 25 of Arcady Avenue, W1 (0171-494 5741). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mats Sat, 4.30pm.
- THE DANCE OF DEATH** Simonberg's impressionistic, sometimes comic, view of marriage as hell. Saxon's characterisation by Gemma Jones and John Neville. Almeida, Almeida St, N1 (0171-359 4400). Mon-Sat, 8pm; mat Sat, 4pm.
- DESIGN FOR LIVING** Rachel Weisz, Rupert Graves and Marcus D'Amico in Cressida Cowell's first comedy. Sean Mathias's sweetener, with even more sexual rough and tumble than at the Dornier. Gielgud, Shaftesbury Avenue, W1 (0171-494 5065). Mon-Sat, 8pm; mats Thurs, 3pm and Sat, 4pm.
- THE DUCHESSE OF MALFI** Juliet Stevenson suffers, Simon Russell Beale writhes, in a production that isn't quite there but should improve. Greenwich, Greenwich Hill, SE10 (0181-858 7752). Mon-Sat, 7.45pm; mat Sat, 2.30pm. Until Mar 25.
- FULL MOON** Jon Steward plays the hero of Caradoc Prichard's powerful and haunting semi-autobiographical novel, set in the dramatic context of North Wales. Helena Kaut-Howson's acclaimed Theatre Company production. Young Vic, The Old Vic, SE1 (0171-329 6363). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mats Sat, 2.30pm. Until Mar 4.
- HAMILT** Ralph Fiennes, Francesca Annis, James Lounsbury, Peter Eyre, Robertson Joseph and Terence Rigby in Jonathan Kent's eagerly awaited Almeida production. Haymarket, Haymarket, W1 (0171-372 1255). Return tickets only for rest of run, until Mar 25.
- INDIAN INK** Felicity Kendal, Margaret Tyness, and Art Malik in Tom Stoppard's new play, set in unrecognisable India in 1930 and a Shepton Mallet bungalow. 10222, Peter Wood directs the original Chicago production. Apollo, Shaftesbury Avenue, W1 (0171-494 5070). Now previewing, 8pm. Opens March 6.
- KILLER JOE** Usher absorbing shock, directed by Tracy Letts where a trash-traveler family virtually annihilates itself by employing a hit-man to kill their unwanted son. Wilson Munn directs the original Chicago production, transferred from the Bush. Vaudeville, Strand, WC2 (0171-836 2270). Mon-Sat, 8pm.
- THE LIVED SHOW** Caroline Quenon and Paul Merton play a couple on their journey towards sharing a bed in Arthur Smith's comedy. Garrick, Charing Cross Road, WC2 (0171-394 5055). Mon-Thurs, 8pm; Fri and Sat, 8.30pm and 8.45pm.
- MYSTERY** The play of Ken Cramer's marvelous solo talk-show, parable universes, the Holy Grail and the Grand Theory of Everything. King's Head, 115 Upper Street, N1 (0171-326 1916). Tue-Sat, 8pm; mat Sat, 3.30pm. Until Mar 5.
- THE PRESENT** Australian comic Neil Ward's latest, excellent comic but with a twist. Bush, Shaftesbury Avenue, W1 (0171-494 5065). Mon-Sat, 8pm.
- THE STRIP** Phila May's latest, set in Las Vegas where an odd bunch of characters are competing for a 100,000. St James's, St James's Place, W1 (0171-329 6363). Mon-Sat, 8pm; mat Sat, 2.30pm. Until Mar 4.
- HAILEY** Ralph Fiennes, Francesca Annis, James Lounsbury, Peter Eyre, Robertson Joseph and Terence Rigby in Jonathan Kent's eagerly awaited Almeida production. Haymarket, Haymarket, W1 (0171-372 1255). Return tickets only for rest of run, until Mar 25.
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CINEMA GUIDE

- UP TO THE SCAFFOLD** (1967). An absorbing thriller about a murder that goes wrong. With Maurice Ronno, Jeanne Moreau and a Miles Davis jazz score. Newmarket (0171-435 1509).
- TUNNEL BORN KILLERS** (1984). Sex, drugs, choice, page 2. Newmarket (0171-435 1509).
- THE RIVER WILD** (1982). Criminals murder a family on their way to a remote holiday. With Mary Kemp and David Jason. Director: Curtis Hanson. Newmarket (0171-435 1509).
- HEAVENLY CREATURES** (1984). Strange tale of a young woman who is taken to a remote holiday. With Mary Kemp and David Jason. Director: Curtis Hanson. Newmarket (0171-435 1509).
- INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE** (1988). Tom Cruise stars as a young man who is taken to a remote holiday. With Mary Kemp and David Jason. Director: Curtis Hanson. Newmarket (0171-435 1509).
- LEON** (1987). Precious child shelters under a woman's wing. With Tom Cruise and a young woman. Director: Luc Besson. Newmarket (0171-435 1509).
- THE LION KING** (1994). African lion king's tale of a young man who is taken to a remote holiday. With Mary Kemp and David Jason. Director: Curtis Hanson. Newmarket (0171-435 1509).
- ONLY YOU** (1994). Maria Tesson chooses the man of her dreams through Italy. With a young man and a young woman. Director: Luc Besson. Newmarket (0171-435 1509).
- BLACK BEAUTY** (1994). Unsettling, gloomy version of the children's classic, featuring Sean Bean and David Thewlis. Director: Caroline Thompson. Barbican, Silk Street, EC2 (0171-538 8891).
- THE RIVER WILD** (1982). Criminals murder a family on their way to a remote holiday. With Mary Kemp and David Jason. Director: Curtis Hanson. Newmarket (0171-435 1509).
- HEAVENLY CREATURES** (1984). Strange tale of a young woman who is taken to a remote holiday. With Mary Kemp and David Jason. Director: Curtis Hanson. Newmarket (0171-435 1509).
- INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE** (1988). Tom Cruise stars as a young man who is taken to a remote holiday. With Mary Kemp and David Jason. Director: Curtis Hanson. Newmarket (0171-435 1509).
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SPARTACUS

CIC, PG, 1961
"PRESENTED for the first time uncut with never-before-seen footage," shouts the video box. As with the recent cinema revival, the handful of minutes added to Stanley Kubrick's epic about the proud Thracian slave struggling for freedom includes a few goblets of gore and a foolish scene of Laurence Olivier limbering up for a bathhouse seduction of Tony Curtis. Cliches rule eventually, but the opening scenes at the Capua gladiator school go with a swing, and if Kirk Douglas's set grimace gets wearing, Peter Ustinov, Oliver and Charles Laughton are always on hand to entertain.

THE ENIGMA OF KASPAR HAUSER

Tartan, 15, 1974
Werner Herzog weaves his magic round the story of a strange 19th-century German who materialises in a town square, his origins unknown. Scientists get to work dissecting and rationalising the phenomenon, but Herzog and Hauser (played by the equally mysterious Bruno S.) leave a question mark over the value of civilised society. One of Herzog's best films.

NORTH

Guid, PG, 1994
Rob Reiner's quirky film follows Elijah Wood's young hero across the globe as he searches for the perfect home after divorcing his parents. Some quick, silly jokes to cherish; but a subplot about fostering revolution weighs down what should have been a light satire on family values. Littered with cameo players, from Bruce Willis, first seen in a pink bunny suit, to Graham Greene and Kathy Bates, Alaskan homebodies with a high-tech igloo. Available to rent.

VIRIDIANA

Electric, 15, 1961
BUNUEL returned to Spain from his Mexican exile to make this wonderfully sly film about a young nun (Silvia Pinal), brimful of Christian charity, and her fate at the hands of her attentive uncle, local peasants and beggars. In the most famous sequence, a



Sword play: Kirk Douglas stars as Spartacus in Stanley Kubrick's epic of a slave rebellion against imperial Rome

beggar's banquet slips into an outrageous parody of the Last Supper. Funny, deeply cynical, and disturbing: Spain banned it for 16 years.

THE BURNING

Warner, 15, 1994
DAVID Putnam's long-cherished film about Chico Mendes was bounced around producers, finally

emerging as a cable-television movie, and an excellent one. Both Robert De Niro and Dustin Hoffman had been mentioned for the role of Mendes, who helped peasants in Brazil's rain forests fight the destruction of their terrain before being killed in 1988. But the role went to the late Raul Julia, already seriously ill, who gives his all in a low-key but powerful performance.

Impressive work too from director John Frankenheimer, who pays due regard for local atmosphere and tries to avoid Hollywood tricks.

UNE PARTIE DE PLAISIR

Art House, 15, 1974
CLAUDE Chabrol's harrowing domestic melodrama is given a special resonance by its screenwriter Paul Gégau.

cast in the lead with his ex-wife Danièle in a semi-autobiographical, unrelenting story about a self-destructive marriage. Behind the husband's chauvinist tantrums lies a thwarted vision of paradise lost. Gégau never regained his paradise in real life: he was stabbed to death by his second wife nine years later.

GEOFF BROWN

Making a compact with density

Today's CD is about to be superseded by one that can hold the complete works of Wagner

Last July, I mentioned that researchers at IBM and elsewhere were working on a whole new breed of silver disc capable of storing awesome amounts of information by using a series of separate layers. Now Philips and Sony, the joint creators of the original CD standard, have agreed on specifications for just such a disc format, to be called High Density Compact Disc, or HDCD.

This will be the same size as the present CD, which holds a maximum of 640 megabytes of data, and can be produced — though not played — on basically the same machinery. Even in its earliest form, though, HDCD will hold something like five times as much information, by reading the minute "pits" which comprise the digital information with a narrower red laser beam, 635 nanometres wide instead of 780 nanometres. The pits themselves can therefore be smaller and their spiralling track tighter, so many more will fit onto the disc's surface. The maximum capacity will be some 3.7 gigabytes. A gigabyte is a thousand megabytes.

That means an awful lot of sound recording — not just the Ring on a single disc, as one humorist suggested, but Wagner's complete works. The extra space could also be used to increase the bandwidth capacity — the "elbow-room" of the sound signal — from the present 16 bits to 18, and so the audio quality. This would make sense, as new recordings are increasingly made on 18 or 20-bit systems anyway.

However, the extra capacity will be of most use to data-intensive applications such as video and multimedia. At the recent Las Vegas Consumer Electronics show, Sony was showing a prototype of the new disc as DVD, or Digital Video Disc, able to hold up to 135 minutes of high-quality video (the MPEG-2 standard I mentioned some months ago) on a single side — enough for a full-length film.

This much is only the beginning. With the American giant 3M, Philips and Sony are also developing that multiple-layer version, in which the laser will be able to shine right through the surface track to a second one underneath. This would increase the capacity to a mindboggling 7.4 gigabytes — enough for Wagner, Verdi and Puccini, probably. And, according to some informed sources, the technology could eventually be extended to as

much as five layers. That is enough to make anyone blink, and to read some of the reporting, you would think the once-mighty CD was about to become obsolete tomorrow. But do not sell your collection just yet.

Over the past decade, CD has thoroughly colonised the world with its hardware and software: sheer inertia is going to keep it in place for a long time

to come. For sound-only purposes not many people are going to need that vast extra capacity — not enough to pay for it, anyway. Furthermore, HDCD is not scheduled to reach the market for at least two years, and the first players are likely to cost about £1,000. This will confine them chiefly to business markets and the most expensive end of domestic CD-Rom and home cinema. It could be four or five years before the price falls enough to make HDCD a popular product. And all the players will be "backwards-compatible", able to play ordinary CDs as well. It is the secondary formats, the various videodisc and CD-Rom systems such as Video CD, in which investment is less heavy and constant upgrade more in demand, which are most in danger.

There is, however, another possibility — that any kind of spinning discs may be heading for an almighty slip. Their successor might already be here — the ordinary memory chip. Next time, I shall be looking at how likely this is. Meanwhile, enjoy the music.

MICHAEL SCOTT ROHAN

A tour de force, written by a genius, directed by a master — and analysed by Theatre Club members. How can you resist?

Dismember Miller's tale

THE TIMES THEATRE CLUB

CRITICS agree that America's greatest living playwright, Arthur Miller, has surpassed even himself with *Broken Glass*. Set in Brooklyn in 1938, this powerful, brooding and darkly humorous play tells the story of a woman,

her sudden paralysis and its effect on her paralytic husband. After a sell-out run at the National Theatre, *Broken Glass* has transferred to the Duke of York's theatre, St Martin's Lane, WC2 — and Theatre Club members can see it, and then discuss it over a glass of wine with its award-winning director, David Thacker.

Thacker is no stranger to Miller's work: as artistic director of the Young Vic he was responsible for productions of *The Crucible*, *All My Sons* and *The Last Yankee*. His production of *Pericles* for the Royal Shakespeare Company won the 1991 Olivier Awards for Best Director and Best Revival.

Club members can see the play on March 3 and attend the post-show discussion for £20 (the normal price of a ticket alone is £22.50). Tel 0171-836 9837, quoting your membership number

THIS WEEK'S SPECIALS

LONDON

The Playhouse

March 3

● **INFLUENCE** the development of a new play by attending the rehearsed reading of Michael Coney's new thriller *Dead on Time*. Tickets £5, including a glass of wine during the interval. Following the reading there will be a brief discussion between the author/director, cast members and the audience. Tel 0171-839 4292

Young Vic

Feb 28-March 4

● **CARADOC PRICHARD'S Full Moon** vividly evokes life in the slate-mining district of north Wales during the First World War. Helena Kaut-Howson's powerful production is enhanced by Richard Blackford's atmospheric choral music. Theatre Club members can buy two tickets for the price of one (normally £6.50 and £13.50). Tel 0171-620 0568

Tricycle Theatre

Feb 27-29

● **DUBBELJOINT** was formed in 1990 to create popular theatre that confronts the problems facing contemporary Ireland. The company's new production *A Night*

in November (an Afternoon in June) by Marie Jones marks the return of the highly successful team that produced *The Government Inspector* last year. Theatre Club members can buy two tickets for the price of one (normally £7.50). Telephone 0171-328 1000

BRIGHTON

Theatre Royal

March 1-4

● **THE Rolling Stones and Hieronymus Bosch** combine to produce an evening of "athletic and glamorous dancing" under the direction of Christopher Bruce. *The Garden of Earthly Delights* uses music, movement lighting and special effects (with both musicians and dancers "flying" on stage) to bring to life Bosch's surreal painting of the same name. Danced to the music of the Stones, *Rooster* is full of driving energy and wit. Club members can buy tickets for £9 (normal price £14). Tel 01273 327480

SHEFFIELD

Crucible Theatre

March 6, 13, 20

● **JUDY FLYNN** stars in *When We Are Married* by J.B. Priestley. Club members

One of this year's must-see plays: Margot Leicester in Arthur Miller's *Broken Glass* — see first listing

can buy tickets for £4.50 and £5.50 (normally £9 and £11). Tel 0114-276 0621

PLYMOUTH

Theatre Royal

March 15-24

● **ONE** of Tennessee Williams's most powerful and moving plays, *The Glass Menagerie* is the story of Amanda Wingfield, abandoned by her husband and taking re-

use in recollections of her "gentleman callers". Theatre Club members can buy tickets for £4.50 (normally £6.50). Tel 01752 267222

WINCHESTER

Theatre Royal

March 6-11

● **YOUNG** lovers conspire to avoid a father's marriage plans, setting off an unstoppable, unpredictable series of

farical events in *Love is a Drug*, designed and directed by Antonio Fava. Save 25 per cent on tickets for all performances (normally £9.50 to £12.50). Tel 01962 843434

DUNDEE

Repertory Theatre

March 15-16

● **WINNER** of the Evening Standard Most Promising Playwright award, Rona Munro's *Bold Girls* tells the story of four streetwise women in west Belfast. Club members can buy tickets for £4.50 and £6 (normally £6.50 and £8). Tel 01382 223530

NOTTINGHAM

Theatre Royal

March 6-9

● **THE** classic Sean O'Casey play *The Plough & The Stars* is set in the tenements, streets and bars of Dublin in the days of the 1916 Rising. Members can save £4 on tickets (normally £12-£16). Tel 0115-948 2626

BLACKPOOL

Grand Theatre

March 7-8

● **MILLICENT MARTIN**, Patrick Cargill, Michael Cashman and Mark Curry star in Michael Frayn's comedy *Noises Off*. Members can buy tickets for £5 to £11 (normally £7 to £13). Tel 01253 28372

JOIN NOW

TO JOIN the Theatre Club either send a cheque for £12.50, made payable to The Theatre Club, together with your name, address and telephone number to The Theatre Club, P.O. Box 2164, Colchester CO1 1GN, or telephone 0206 791737 using your credit card. Please allow 28 days for delivery of your membership pack. For general inquiries call 071-387 9673

TO BOOK for any or all of this week's special offers, please phone the listed number during normal office hours. The price printed on the ticket you receive is the special price negotiated by the Theatre Club. There may be a transaction charge to cover postage. Membership of the Theatre Club costs £12.50 a year and entitles members to buy two tickets for any club offer. Every week, members can save money, meet the cast and directors of productions, or visit different theatres on exclusive weekend breaks

ARTS

7

RECORDINGS: Jennifer Larmore is an unflashy Cinderella; Molly Half Head's twist on the Beatles; Schubert has never had it so good

OPERA

John Higgins

ROSSINI
La Cenerentola
Larmore/Gimenez/Quilico/
Corbelli Royal Opera House
Orchestra/Rizzi
Teldec 4909-94553-2 (2
CDs)***

THE Covent Garden Orchestra produces a regular flow of ballet recordings, but a couple of years have passed since its last complete opera set. On the evidence of Teldec's *Cenerentola* the absence is too long. Under Carlo Rizzi the Opera House players produce true Rossini fizz, but there is also a precision that Abbado used to demand when he toured this opera around the world with the Scala company.

Like Abbado, Rizzi delights in Rossini's trademarks: the surrations in the orchestra during the Act I finale, the obligatory storm in Act II. And, like Abbado, he demands a cast which can roll every "r" and spit out every "p" in the sedate bewilderment. *Questo è un nodo avvilupato*, which can be roughly translated as "Here's a pretty mess".

Rizzi's cast serves him admirably. The American mezzo, Jennifer Larmore, has yet to sing *Cenerentola* at Covent Garden and on this evidence the omission should be quickly rectified. It is not a flashy performance, although Larmore pips out the extravagant runs of the final rondo with the best of them. Instead, she concentrates on the innate kindness of Rossini's Cinderella. The phrase "trionfa la bontà" ("beneficence triumphs") crops up a couple of times in the second act and it is all personified in Cinderella. Jennifer Larmore, with her smoky and generous timbre, catches this perfectly.

She also catches the love-at-first-sight encounter with Ramiro in Act I, where prince and pauper are as moonstruck as Rodolfo and Mimì in *Bohème*. Raul Gimenez is as graceful a performer as ever the noble suitor, with a brace-let rather than a glass slipper to match. The tripartite aria in which he sets off on the quest is not quite given the left that Ariza brought to it on Sony's set, but Gimenez certainly has a go.

Alessandro Corbelli was also on that recording as the philosopher Alidoro (here taken with nice gravity by Alastair Miles). He now moves up to the role of Don Magnifico, Cinderella's greedy old stepfather, and shows himself to be the natural successor to Enzo Dara who long commanded the role. Corbelli's sense of timing and comedy is a joy, and he is at his best in the skirmishes with Dandini. The valet is sung by Gino Quilico with deft good humour. Adelina Scarabelli and Laura Polverelli are the "ugly" sisters, chattering away like a pack of starlings and just as bad tempered.

ORCHESTRAL

Barry Millington

BIZET
Symphony in C;
Rome
Paris
Orchestre du Capitole de
Toulouse/Plasson
EMI CDC 5 55057 2***

BIZET
Symphony in C;
Jeux d'enfants
Scènes Bohémiennes
New Zealand SO/Johanos
Naxos 8.553027***
THOUGH it has only been in the repertoire since 1935, following the rediscovery of its score, Bizet's youthful *Symphony in C* is an attractive, skillfully wrought and deservedly popular work. Bizet was only 17 when he wrote it, but the symphony is far more than an adroit reworking of stylistic models: the richness of its invention gives clear notice of a major composer in the wings.

Both these new recordings do the piece full justice. Perhaps Michel Plasson's lightness of touch gives him the edge in capturing the Rossinian sparkle of the first movement. But Donald Johanos's weightier orchestral



The American mezzo, Jennifer Larmore, sings Cinderella and concentrates on the character's innate kindness

sound, with trumpets and drums more prominent, brings out the influence of (early) Beethoven and Schubert which is also undeniably there.

Nor is Johanos's New Zealand Symphony Orchestra inferior to Plasson's better-known Orchestre du Capitole de Toulouse — indeed, the latter's tone can be a mite acerbic — producing the occasional sour note.

In the finale, Plasson's hand-



Bizet: youthful zest

dling of the march-like bridge theme (a foretaste of the street urchins' music in *Carmen*) is more exuberant and has a more focused sound. Otherwise, in both the *Adagio*, with its soaring string theme, and the *Scherzo* there is very little to choose between the two versions, though Johanos is more scrupulous about repeats.

The matter may therefore be decided by economics, Naxos (Johanos) being a budget label, while the EMI release (Plasson) is full price. Or it may be decided by the coupling. If you are attracted by the little suite from *Jeux d'enfants* and the gypsy scenes from *The Fair Maid of Perth*, the Naxos disc is the one to have.

Plasson offers two less familiar works that are worth investigating: *Patrie*, a response to the Franco-Prussian War, has its moments but is marred by over-inflated rhetoric; *Roma* is Bizet's other major symphonic work, lacking the spontaneity and youthful zest of the *C Major* yet, in spite of its touches of melodrama and sanctimoniousness, containing some inspired music, scored with Bizet's characteristic mastery.

20TH CENTURY

Stephen Pettitt

KANCHELI
Symphonies Nos 6 and 7.
"Epilogue"
Tbilisi SO/Kakhidze
Sony Classical SMK 66
590***

THE work of the Georgian composer Giya Kancheli is outwardly just as disturbing in its elemental extremes as the Sixth and Seventh Symphonies (1981 and 1989) prove. Yet Kancheli has a penchant also for a sweetness, more prevalent in the Seventh than the Sixth. The recording is vivid, to say the least, and comes with warnings about extremes of dynamic that those of nervous disposition should certainly heed. The playing of the excellent Tbilisi Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Kancheli's long-time champion, Jansug Kakhidze, has real passion behind it.

KANCHELI
Morning Prayers/Abiti ne viderem/Evening Prayers.
Soloists/Stuttgart
Kammerorchester/Russell
Davies
ECM New Series 445 941-
2***
ECM's Kancheli disc includes two pieces, *Morning Prayers* (1990) and *Evening Prayers* (1991) from the affecting cycle *Life without Christmas*, while *Abiti ne viderem* (1992-94), though suffused with more overt drama than those two understated pieces, is closely related to their bleak world, its title a reflection of the composer's self-admonition at having left Georgia when atrocities against humanity were on the rise.

The flavour here, thanks partly to the presence in *Morning Prayers* and *Evening Prayers* of the human voice (the distantly piping, pre-recorded boy treble of Vasiko Tevdorashvili in the first and the four singers of the Hilliard Ensemble in the second), is less aggressive than in the two symphonies, and more affecting. The message, however, is essentially the same: a tale of centuries of hardship. Again, fine performances all, this time from Dennis Russell Davies and the Stuttgart

Chamber Orchestra; but do not play this disc if you want to be cheered up.

USTVOLSKAYA
Compositions I, II, III
Schonberg Ensemble/De
Leeuw
Philips 442 53-2***
THE former Soviet territories are proving rich picking grounds for the record companies keen on demonstrating their contemporary music credentials. One welcomes nevertheless these three releases of work by two of the region's most important composers.

Of the two composers, one born in 1919, the other in 1935, the older, Galina Ustvol'skaya, pupil and intimate of Shostakovich, strikes me as perhaps possessing the more potent and radical voice. Her *Composition I*, *Composition II* and *Composition III*, each subtitled with the name of a section from the Requiem Mass, and each inhabiting a remarkably advanced sound-world considering the dates of composition (1970-71, 1972-73 and 1974-75), show her concerned with elemental effect.



Ustvol'skaya: heartfelt music

Slow, simple, repetitious, based on bland assertion rather than organic development and simple fragments of melody (is the reference to Purcell's *Dido's Lament* deliberate?), this is heartfelt music. Its shocking impact is partly derived from its scoring, which is outwardly bizarre but perfectly suited to the temperament of each movement.

Composition I is for piccolo, mba and piano; *Composition II* for eight double basses, piano and a cube of sides precisely 43 cms long; *Composition III* for four flutes, four

bassoons and piano. The Schonberg Ensemble play with the right mix of poise and aggression under Reinbert de Leeuw's direction; it is good to see these artists assembling a major and innovative discography for a major company.

Hilary Finch

SCHUBERT

Lieder

Blochwitz/Jansen

Philips 438 932-2***

NEVER has Schubert had it so good: never has it been more baffling for the record collector. Among the piles of reissues from the old guard and the new releases from the young, a new disc of his songs from the German tenor Hans Peter Blochwitz makes a loud case for itself this month.

This is no heavily significant thematic recital, no diligent historical survey: Blochwitz offers a sampler of 19 songs, from the earliest Goethe settings to the very last song Schubert wrote. He sings of babbling brooks, of moonlight nights, of fishermen and wanderers, all with a fresh delight which is sure to get the beginner hooked. Yet there is enough art and sophistication here to ensnare the connoisseur too.

Rudolf Jansen's piano playing makes a song such as *Der Musensohn* live in air, yet has its feet firmly on the ground for the trotting farewell of *Abschied* or the wild gallop of *Auf der Bruck*. Even in the darkest, latest songs, such as *Die Stadt*, Blochwitz makes sure that the words do not bear down on the music, but live nimbly in its current. Don't miss this one.

SCHUMANN

Liederkreis, Songs, etc

Schmidt/Jansen

DG 439 943-2***

RUDOLF Jansen reappears, this time with Andreas Schmidt on his latest *Lieder* disc, and the pianist's robust attention to detail helps to focus and brighten the more introverted musical personality of this baritone. Schmidt is a thoughtful performer — though hardly the zombie Christopher Nupen made him out to be in his recent film of

Schubert's last years. There are times, though, when one wishes that more of the question marks, exclamation marks, smiles and doubts within a cycle such as Schumann's *Liederkreis* would register in his voice. Schmidt's control of line, dynamics and verbal inflection in a song such as *Mondnacht* is exemplary, but the frisson factor is a little low.

He engages more with the composer's 12 simple and sober settings of poems by Kerner, and his earnest enunciation re-creates Schumann's own clear-sighted responses to the vivid images of Hans Christian Andersen's poetry.

POP ALBUMS

David Sinclair

P. J. HARVEY

To Bring You My Love

Island 524 085***

WITH her flowing black hair, pale complexion and blood-red lips, P. J. Harvey could, fleetingly, be mistaken for an English rose. But if so, she is one whose music is more thorn than petal.

To Bring You My Love, her fourth album in three years, sounds at times like the work of a soul cast into outer darkness. "I've lain with the Devil/Cursed God above/Forsaken heaven/To bring you my love," she wails in a tone of increasing agitation. Like most of the album it is unforgiving, hung on the brittle bones of a simple bluesy riff played by Harvey.

At its most forbidding, as on the claustrophobic *I Think I'm A Mother*, Harvey's music recalls the voodoo narratives of Nick Cave.

But whereas previous P. J. Harvey albums have accentuated her more acerbic qualities (especially *Rid Of Me*), on this one the production — by Flood, Harvey and John Parish — brings out a more beguiling quality. And a new side is revealed on *Clon Billy* and *Send His Love To Me*, both neat tunes driven by acoustic guitars.

Nothing can impinge on the witchy sense of otherness that Harvey brings to her music, but these songs are among the most accessible she has yet recorded. All the signs are that her time has come.

POP SINGLES

David Sinclair

MOLLY HALF HEAD

Breaking The Ice

Columbia 661216***

THE curiously named Molly Half Head have been threatening great things since the release of a fine debut album, *Sulk*, in 1993. They come from Manchester (where else?); they smear a lot and their music is subject to a slight but persistent John Lennon influence.

But, unlike Oasis, that other Beatles-inspired group from Manchester, Molly Half Head have given the familiar ingredients an entirely new, left-field twist. *Breaking The Ice* is a great up-tempo pop song, with lots of edge and a killer chorus, despite its inscrutable lyric: "What goes round is coming round again/What goes down is coming up again".



Molly Half Head: edge

The B-sides, *Blistered* and *Airwaves*, are altogether more weird songs, which suggest an early interest in the Fall and some of the more extreme sonic digressions of the first Roxy Music album.

Watch out for a new album, due in May.

CLIVE DAVIS

Various Artists

Burning for Buddy: A tribute

to the music of Buddy Rich

Atlantic/Anthem 7567-82699-
2***

THE reviews were mixed — to put it mildly — on the quality of Buddy Rich's orchestra and its arrangements, particularly

in the last years of his life, but no one would have dared to question Buddy Rich's commitment to the big band ethos.

Though subtlety was never his main asset, he remained a volcanic showman who enjoyed nothing better than whipping his men on to greater efforts. Other bands fell by the wayside, the victim of economics and audience indifference; Rich held his together by sheer force of personality.

Burning for Buddy boasts a decidedly odd pedigree. Conceived and produced by Neil Peart, the project involved assembling a battalion of drummers, and setting them loose on a collection of Rich scores, performed by the great man's orchestra.

Marvin "Smitty" Smith and David Brubeck's illustrious colleague Joe Morello carry the flag for the jazz mainstream, and Max Roach makes an appearance, in two soundbites from the solo piece *The Drum Also Walzes*.

The unlikely list of outsiders ranges from the ever-versatile Steve Gadd, the king of bombastic funk Billy Cobham, and — the most unlikely choice of all — Matt Sorum from the headbangers Guns 'N' Roses. This album is the first of two or three volumes, the second of which, we are promised, will lean more towards the swing tradition.

Against all the odds, the mish-mash of styles holds together. As big band music goes, it may not be all that sophisticated or daring, but what we are left with are a dozen or so in-your-face performances that would probably have had Rich (a perfectionist if ever there was one) emitting a grunt of approval.

Peart himself has a chance to sit in the cockpit for *Cotton Tail*, riding the hi-hat with assurance as he waits for the horns to introduce the theme. There is a workaday quality to many of the charts, the players gearing up for one climax after another. Bill Bruford's own composition, *Lingo*, breaks away from the routine and replaces the juggernaut read settings with quirky, pop-influenced keyboard textures.

* Worth hearing
** Worth considering
*** Worth buying

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BRITIS WINNERS 1995 - BEST ALBUM - BEST BAND - BEST SINGLE - BEST VIDEO

blur

PARKLIFE

Best band, best album, best single and best video. That's the biggest Brits victory in the history of the 13 year event. As far as Britain is concerned Blur are the sound of '95.

TODAY

The popgroup Blur became the first act in the 13 year history of the Brits to win four awards.

THE TIMES

The music industry and the record-buying public appeared to be in rare accord last night when Blur picked up four Brit Awards at the annual pop awards ceremony.

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

"As far as the music industry is concerned 1994 was the year of Blur. Apart from picking up a record four Brits trophies for their PARKLIFE album, which has sold 200,000 copies, the LP also won them a Q magazine award, two Smash Hits awards and four Brit awards commonly known as the 'alternative Brits'."

DAILY EXPRESS

PARLOPHONE NO PARKLIFE. NO COMMENT.

ET THREE, BRUTE.

Fairfax Isle

'JULIUS CAESAR' RICHARD DREYFUSS LEADS A HOLLYWOOD CAST IN RADIO 3'S NEW PRODUCTION.
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26TH. 7:30PM-9:30PM.

BRITAIN'S
GREATEST
HITS

OUTDOORS

Take with a dose of sheep tonic

It is that time of year when pregnant ewes have to be watched very carefully. In the last few weeks before birth, the growing lamb places huge demands on the mother's metabolism, and things can go wrong. We have had a couple of ewes who decided it was all too much for them; one thought things might be better if she gave her insides an airing, and prolapsed. The vet stuffed it all back and told her not to do it again. But the other ewe was more serious and needed to be dosed to prevent further trouble. One of the symptoms of her problem was a lack of spatial awareness: she would stand, muddled and slightly confused. The vet left me a large bottle of medicine with these instructions: "If you see anything wandering around looking lost, give it a dose."

Well, we could all do with a swig at that bottle. As anyone who knows this farm realises only too well, we are all in a permanent state of bewilderment. I put it down to drink, which, I now confess, has proved to be the remedy to a long-standing problem. Before Christmas I opened my

heart to you concerning the chaotic state of the farm workshop. No job could be attempted, because to do so would require the workshop to be tidied, which was a job beyond any normal individual. I asked for your suggestions on how to achieve a permanent tidiness. They were welcome, but none offered what I thought would be a final solution. Then alcoholic drink reared its tantalising head.

It is the practice of our local wine-merchant to dispose of smallish, but sturdy built, wooden wine-boxes when the contents have been sold. I bought a dozen. In one I put the small spanners, in another the larger yet another has anything related to mending fences, and one contains plumbing bits and pieces. Nothing clever about that, you might say. But where the system scores over all others is that tools have taken on an entirely new personality. You see, the boxes still carry the labels describing the bottles they used to



FARMER'S DIARY: PAUL HEINEY

contain. In the one which bears the mark LUEsprit-Chevalier

Rouge 1990, I keep large screwdrivers, and so instead of facing a stubborn screw and the prospect of hunting down a screwdriver under

embark upon the search with the care of a vintner going through his finest wines. Screwdrivers have now become known on this farm as chevaliers; in a box stamped

Château Cissac, we keep the screws, and in a Ma De Dommus Gassac a gate needs fixing and we decide on the tools for the job. I say to myself, "We'll need two heavy chevaliers, a handful of mixed

Cissacs, and we'll give it a belt with the Gassac if it doesn't fit." Silly, I know, but farming can be repetitive and lonely, and it eases the daily burden a little.

The other reason I and my helpers have all been going round in circles is because of your response to my request for advice on the trussing of hay. Cutting hay and carting it from stack to cattle happens several times a week here in the winter, and I am not certain I am going about it the best way.

Mr Mitchell of Ruislip warns me that his great-grandfather fell from a stack in 1872, and died. He advises me that hay cannot be trussed properly without a long steel pin with a looped handle at one end, which I do not have.

More worrying came a note from Kent after I mentioned the wimble, a device for turning hay or straw into ropes which were used to tie the cut trusses of hay. The note says, "I rang a farmer who knew more about it than me. Un-

fortunately, he didn't want to go on about it." Curious. Is the use of the wimble some kind of secret? After gleaning a little knowledge, my correspondent then says "... at that point he lost me, and I dare not ring him back." Dare not? What kind of men were these old hay-trussers?

With the method of making straw into rope not much clearer, I was thankful for an illustrated letter from Nicholas Wood, the most explicit I have received on the subject, which gives full details of the Berwickshire method. It is clearly a team effort requiring two men matched equally in speed; one to turn the wimble, the other to feed the straw.

It was all becoming a little clearer, until I opened another letter which contained the twisted remnants of a Marks and Spencer bag. It is possible that this gruesome little exhibit may unlock the great agricultural mystery of turning straw into rope. I shall examine it closely, and report further. But perhaps now you will understand why we are all wandering round in circles, bewildered, and reaching for the sheep medicine.

Moles: to catch, kill or tolerate

The 'little gentleman in black velvet' is an unwelcome visitor almost everywhere

The writings of Kenneth Grahame accepted, the mole has not had a good press since the death of King William III nearly three centuries ago. "Dutch Billy" died from a cold caught after he was thrown from his favourite horse, Sorrel, in Hampton Court Park. The horse was said to have stumbled over a mole-hill, and the Jacobites were quick to show their appreciation of the small insect's part in the action. "The little gentleman in black velvet" was a popular toast for some time afterwards.

It is not a salutation that is heard often now and it certainly does not rise readily to the lips of groundsmen, greenkeepers and gardeners. With the arrival of spring, mole activity reaches one of its seasonal peaks, and perhaps only those who have planned or laid new stretches of lawn appreciate just how much damage the underground worker can do.

For anyone who finds himself having to deal with an invading mole, the best advice is to shovel away the surface soil and call a truce. Once the initial excavations have been made there is seldom any more damage to the terrain, although a substantially built gardener is always liable to put a foot through the roof of the earthworks. It is almost certain, incidentally, that this is what Sorrel did: no self-respecting horse would trip over a mound of earth.

If the weather is frosty when a mole's activities start, a worthwhile tip is to throw a little water over the hillocks. The frozen heaps of earth can be lifted in one piece the following morning.

If the invaded area borders open country, it is a waste of time trying to remove the miscreant. Success means more than that a vacancy has been created, and that the desirable residence will be re-occupied as soon as it is found to be without an owner.

There are times, though, when trapping the mole is the only solution to an incursion. The old mole-catchers had a vested interest in making such a practice appear difficult but, in spite of the mystique that attaches itself to the art, it requires no great skill. It is

true, though, that a little knowledge of mole behaviour can be helpful.

Tunnels often take surprising twists and turns, but they are easily located if a pointed stick is used to probe the occupied ground. Somewhere between two molehills is an obvious starting point. Sooner or later there will be only slight resistance to the stick indicating that it has penetrated the roof of a tunnel. Then, in theory at any rate, it is necessary only to open up the run, set the trap, put it in position and replace the turf.

In practice it is as well to clear away any loose soil lying in the tunnel. When the mole moves through its burrows it uses one fore-limb to push such debris along in front of it and the accumulation can trigger the trap before the animal reaches it. Also, in easily worked soil the mole may simply by-pass what it sees as a minor obstacle to its progress. In such situations pieces of slate or suitable stones may be positioned so that they channel the victim along the desired route. It is a good idea too for the avenger to mark the trap's location. Irate groundsmen searching for lost apparatus have been known to cause more damage than the moles.

Setting the traps requires some care since they are not only temperamental but, of necessity, double-sided. The Duffus traps which most professionals on my side of the border — Scotland — prefer, are like curved metal mouse-traps with the working mechanism on the lower side. There is a spring-loaded killing loop of wire at each end with a smaller trigger loop nearer the centre. The mole pushes into one side of the trap, and when it has passed half-way through the wire it sets off the trigger. The loop is released, springs

upwards and crushes the animal's chest.

There is a scissor trap which is equally efficient but poses a problem — at least in my patch of countryside. Part of the mechanism protrudes above the ground and can be spotted by local wanderers who are quite likely to have mole troubles of their own, and to help themselves to the traps.

The novice setting his first trap is always anxious to know what will happen if it crashes shut while he is handling it. The traditional, and less than reassuring, response is that it is nothing to worry over since it is one of those mistakes that no one ever makes twice.

The whole business of trapping may sound harmless, and I would be the last to defend it if I thought there was any reasonable alternative. Death is said to be instantaneous but twice I have seen moles which have dragged traps from the ground and died on the surface 20 metres away. However the only effective alternative to using traps is to put down poisoned earthworms as bait. This introduces other dangers, and is almost certainly no kinder to the mole.

Over the years I have tried most of the home-spun remedies which are occasionally given an airing and they have all, for me at any rate, been conspicuously unsuccessful.

Strangely, the most far-fetched solution is the only one I know that has any record of success. Exasperated victims are often portrayed patrolling their garden with shotguns, and this is exactly what farmers did in the past.

Moles make journeys through their territories at fairly regular four-hour intervals. In those far-off days before the first little grey Ferguson tractors arrived, most farmers walked every inch of their land, and they had a fair idea of even such minor events as the time when a particular mole would be active. If there was any movement in the earthworks as they passed by, both the mole and the mole-hill would be blasted out of existence.

JAMES O'HAGAN



The mole may look harmless but it is the bane of the lives of the many groundsmen and gardeners who wage war on the invader



Final solution: the author with a Duffus mole trap

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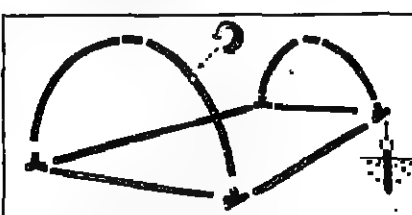
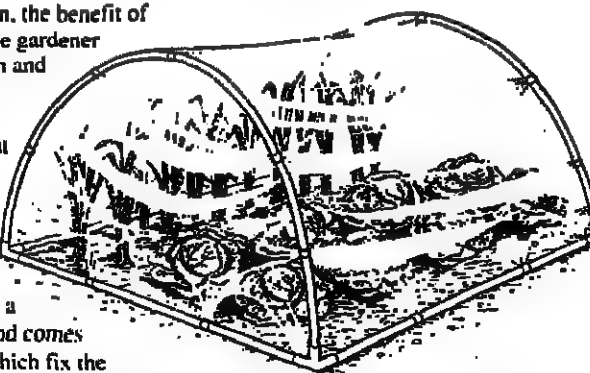
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GANNETS ARE returning to the cliffs and rocky islets where they nest. All through the winter they have been far from home. The younger birds have been fishing in the warm seas off West Africa. The older ones have been out in the North Sea and the Atlantic, or drifting round European shores.

They are among our most spectacular birds. Just to see two or three flying across the horizon is an arresting sight. They are pure white, apart from yellowish heads and black wing tips, and they are almost four feet long from the tip of their fierce bill to the end of their pointed tail. They glide smoothly over the waves, or pass by with majestic wing beats high above the water.

The younger birds look quite different from the adults. The juveniles are practically black, with white flecks. Slowly the black diminishes and the white areas grow — but it is five years before they are fully grown.

Best of all is to see gannets fishing. When they detect a shoal of fish under the water

they rise slightly in the air, half-close their wings, and plunge like a harpoon into the sea. Their wings close tighter just before they enter the water, but they still raise a tremendous splash.

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Gannets are found only in small parties in the winter, but in the summer they are among the most intensively colonial of all birds. They nest on suitable cliff ledges in vast numbers, just out of range of each other's beaks. Around the north and west coasts of Britain there are about 150,000 breeding pairs — with 50,000 of those on the small St Kilda's island of Boreary.

Feather Report

Come sit on my ledge



The sea-faring gannet

However, when a female is away fishing, the male may at this early stage lure another female to his ledge, and when the first one comes back there will be a fierce fight between the two females.

It all sounds very human, but there is probably a biological advantage in the male's faithless behaviour. His first choice may well have gone fishing hundreds of miles away — and faced with the hazards of the sea may never return.

Later the pair get to know each other's voices. They take turns to incubate their solitary egg, and when the one who has been out feeding returns, it soars up the cliff face calling with a raucous cry. Gannets, herring gulls, fulmars and kittiwakes may be swirling about the ledges, but amidst all the din, the incubating bird recognises its mate's call and prepares to greet it.

For centuries, gannet eggs

and fat young gannets were taken for food by marauding humans hanging on ropes down the cliff face. It has been estimated that a million gannets have been taken from the Bass Rock alone in the last thousand years. Now they are protected by law, which may be why their numbers are slowly increasing.

There is probably still some fierce weather to come this year, but they will not be much troubled by it. They sit on their ledges, warm in their thick feathers, all a blizzard has passed. Then they drop off on to an air current, and are soon far away — lonely white hunters of the sea again.

Derwent May

● What's about Birds — Watch for black-headed gulls mauling into their dark-headed breeding plumage. Twickers — Forster's tern at Musselburgh, Lothian; falconer at Coningsby, Lincolnshire; red-breasted goose at East Wootton, Essex. Details from Birdline 0891 70222. Calls cost 40p a minute cheap rate, 50p at all other times.

● Robin Jacques is away.

BOOKS

11

Enjoy a slice of orang appeal

Brian Jackman reviews one woman's gripping account of life among the great apes in the rainforests of Kalimantan in Borneo

If you thought studying animals in the wild was a glamorous occupation, this cautionary tale by Birutė Galdikas may make you think again.

Galdikas, born in Canada of Lithuanian parents, went to Borneo in 1971 to study orang-utans — the last arboreal great apes on earth. Her search took her deep into the tropical rainforests of Kalimantan.

Kalimantan is Borneo's heart of darkness, a trackless wilderness of torrential rain, jungle, rivers as black as tea, and armpit-deep swamps. This was the orang's world, but Galdikas entered it willingly, in spite of the heat and mud, leeches, fire ants, fevers and pit vipers.

Almost at once she became involved in the rehabilitation of captive orang-utans, destined for a life behind bars. Sugito, whom she bought for \$5, was the first orphan to be rescued. Many more were to follow.

But field study was still her main objective. Until her arrival very little was known about the elusive red apes, whose name in Malay means "people of the forest". With Rod, her Canadian husband, she set up her research base

and named it Camp Leakey in honour of her mentor, Louis Leakey, the Kenyan anthropologist.

Galdikas had been fascinated since childhood by human origins, and it was as a student in Los Angeles that she fell under Leakey's spell. Leakey staunchly believed that women were far better suited than men for the arduous business of observing animals in the wild. He had already despatched Jane Goodall to study chimpanzees in Tanzania, and Dian Fossey to live in Rwanda with her gorillas in the mist. Now Leakey, "the Darwin of human evolution", chose Galdikas as the third of his "trinitates", whose discoveries would change our perceptions of the world's great apes.

In Borneo, her Dyak assistants were horrified at the thought of Galdikas wandering alone in the forest. They believed that orangs abduct and rape women. But she saw it differently. "A walk in the

rainforest," writes Galdikas, "is a walk into the mind of God." Overhead she heard the sonic booms of Concorde; but under the trees, nothing had changed.

Day after day she and Rod trailed orangs. Sometimes, having found them, their only reward was to be bombarded with ape dung. And on top of the physical hardships there were confrontations with the logging industry, which would like to reduce the whole of Borneo to a pile of planks.

Galdikas, in this highly readable account of her life in the forest, shows orangs to be more than mere apes. To her they are kindred spirits, fellow citizens in a shrinking world, who deserve our respect and protection.

Once, wild orangs could be counted in their hundreds of thousands; now fewer than 30,000 remain. "As we watch the great apes slip towards extinction," warns Galdikas, "we are witnessing our own future on an increasingly inhospitable planet."

It is a familiar warning. But seldom has it been spelt out with such impassioned clarity.



Wild orangs used to number hundreds of thousands; now fewer than 30,000 remain

A world too true to be strange

THE RIDERS
By Tim Winton
Picador, £14.99

HALE-WAY through this lyrical, painful novel we discover that we are no longer in the love story we at first expected. Instead we are "deep in some big, mad story, a Jonah story, a Sinbad story, a Jesus-and-the-fishermen story, the kind that's too true to be strange, too dreamy to be made up". We are as lost and desperate as the characters on the page as we hope for the same kind of salvation.

Do not read the jacket copy of this book. Perhaps you should stop reading this review right here. Allow yourself to be seduced by the novel's promise of an idyll as Scully labours to improve the dilapidated Irish cottage that he and his wife, Jennifer, bought on first sight, while Jennifer and their daughter Billie tie up loose ends in their native Australia. But when at last Scully meets their plane at Shannon, only Billie disembarks — and she will not speak of her mother, her disappearance, or anything.

The arresting novel is, at one level, a mystery: at another, an adventure. But at its breaking heart it is a fearless exploration of how well we can ever really know each other. Scully's life could never be called orderly — over the past few years his family have travelled all around Europe, with Scully working at whatever he could find to support them — but its still centre is never anything other than Jennifer.

With one simple act she causes her husband to doubt everything he has known to be true. The world, formerly a welcoming place, becomes in one moment as mysterious and threatening as the armed riders who appear one night around the ruined castle below his cottage, their unexplained torchlit presence a testimony to the power of unanswered questions.

Tim Winton has already proved himself able to make us believe that an orange box can be rowed across a field of wheat. In this work he achieves an even more difficult feat: he makes us as willing as Billie to clasp her father's hand and go with him anywhere, on any journey, no matter how senseless or terrible.

His delicate and powerful language evokes the world inside Scully's head where there is no alternative but to seek, no hope but to find. Winton is not a great Australian novelist; he is a great novelist, full stop.

ERICA WAGNER

NEW IN PAPERBACK



Shusaku Endo: themes of guilt and redemption

THE SEA AND POISON

By Shusaku Endo
Peter Owen, £3.50
A Catholic, Endo's novels revolve around the themes of guilt, obsession and redemption. This early offering, based on fact, is about a doctor who operates experimentally on prisoners of war. He is the silent witness to the suffering of innocents, yet he is powerless to prevent it. Memories of these atrocities return to haunt him in later life, and, tormented by regret, he begins a slow, painful decline. A fine book, given added power by this month's testimonies from former members of the Japanese biological warfare unit.

EROS AND PSYCHE

By William Riviere
Sceptre, £5.99
Imogen Scowton brings her infant daughter, whose parentage she will not reveal, to her godmother's Greek island home. Here she meets her lover Dario again, and they negotiate a new relationship aimed at mutual generosity and freedom. Although ostensibly intent on conveying states of mind, Riviere's strong suit is for richly portraying landscape, light, colour, the quality of a place, and it is this that draws the reader on.

HESTER: A romance

By Christopher Bigsby
Phoenix, £5.99
Bigsby's novel re-tells *The Scarlet Letter* from another angle and in a modern authorial voice. Hawthorne's plot is swapped around and added to: his eye for intolerance and hubbub replaced by more general musings. But the account of Hester's Atlantic crossing, beset by storm and pirates, has a verve missing from the rest of this odd undertaking.



ORIENTALISM

By Edward W. Said
Penguin, £8.99
Said, the Palestinian-born professor of English at Columbia University, made his name with this 1978 book, which attacks the stereotypical western vision of the "mysterious" Orient. The origins of so-called Oriental ideas (crucifix, sensuality, despotism) derive, he believes, from imperial power and its subordination of competing cultures. But, as he makes clear in an excellent new Afterword, the end is to challenge not the notion of difference but that difference implies hostility.

Jason Cowley, Mary Sullivan, Jake Michie

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Lawyer without a case

THE ADVOCATE'S DEVIL
By Alan M. Dershowitz
Headline, £16.99

moment, she claimed, because of something he said, she forcefully changed her mind and unambiguously called on him to stop. He did not. The case, at first, seems a sure winner, especially as the woman has a previous record of falsely accusing a man of sexual assault. Gradually, though, to Ringel's dismay, pieces of evidence start to suggest Joe Campbell to be both a liar to his own attorney and, possibly, a rapist.

Much of *The Advocate's Devil* is about a trial lawyer's professional ethics. How far does the duty of the advocate to secure his client's acquittal

extend when he believes — but does not know for sure — that the defendant is guilty and a potential threat to women?

Ringel's ethical dilemmas are described with clarity and conviction, but it seems as though Dershowitz is more interested in the issues than in his cast. Ringel is a widower, who still feels guilty about his unfaithfulness to his wife shortly before her death. His mentor is a dying lawyer who dispenses advice in Delphic riddles; the scenes between the two men are mawkish.

The characters are portrayed functionally rather than with depth or subtlety. That would not matter if plot and action were more lively. But the outcome of the trial is predictable, as is the post-trial denouement. The book is disappointing not because it is bad, but because Dershowitz appeared to have all the credentials for writing an exceptional book, and hasn't. But then, when was a great lawyer also a great novelist?

MARCEL BERLINS

Sex and the Empire

SINCE the British Empire was largely the creation of lonely men a long way from their families, sex flourished deliciously. The outposts of the Empire — in Sir Richard Burton's "Sotadic Zone" of androgyny, pederasty and perversion — were places where Britannia's finest sons could look for sexual pleasures unobtainable at home.

Britons were often slaves to their passions. Consider these words of an army officer, cited in Anton Gill's book: "I prefer to satisfy myself with a... lady of my own class; but in the absence of that I gladly take... prostitutes of all classes and colours, men, boys and animals, melons and masturbation".

The officer was expressing a preference that was as much sexual as political. The view taken of sex by colonial officers was a code of ethics that regarded all working-class

RULING PASSIONS
By Anton Gill
BBC Books, £15.99

women as sexually available and an envy of the size (in racial mythology) of the black man's penis.

Underlying all matters, however, was a deep-seated insecurity, revealed in a letter from Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon, then Viceroy of India, in which he described "the craze of white women for running after black men". The coloniser's sexuality was often

distastefully expressed in deed as well, as when General Sir Hector MacDonald, Commander-in-Chief of Ceylon, was caught in 1902 "in flagrante delicto with no fewer than four Sinhalese boys in a railway carriage at Kandy". To arrive at a more complex understanding of sex and Empire than that offered by Gill, you could of course immerse yourself in Edward Said's *Orientalism* and Elaine Showalter's *Sexual Anarchy*. But where Gill scores — if that is the appropriate word — is in the bubbling richness of his anecdotes and the simplicity of his message. There was, not to put too fine a point on it, a lot of sex in the British Empire. And melons were not the only forbidden fruit.

TUNKU

VARADARAJAN

Visions, see page 6

TIMES BOOKS

THURSDAY

Peter Ackroyd on the beggars' bard, John Gay; plus Rachel Cusk reviews the new Hilary Mantel

The serpents in paradise

Clive Anderson's latest television offering was not originally called *Our Man In...* at all, but *Trouble in Paradise*. The series' name was changed when it occurred to the BBC that it might have been tricky to secure permission to film in some of the countries using a name which blatantly suggested that things were not as marvellous as they seemed.

But trouble in paradise is the series' raison d'être. The six modern "paradises" — Goa, the Masai Mara, Dominica, Hawaii, Timorlands (Oregon, USA) and, of course, Havana — were all chosen in the knowledge that the serpent was not just hissing about on the threshold, but was usually propping up the bar with a piña colada in hand.

Of all the different challenges faced by these latter-day idylls — from communism to the lumber industry — the one which invariably crops up is the corrosive effect of international tourism. As Anderson poignantly remarks of Hawaii, where today only between 1 and 4 per cent of the population are full-blooded Hawai-

ians, "so many Americans have come here to get away from it all that they have brought it all with them."

Poignant is not a word which you would normally associate with Anderson. In his introduction he declares that although all the films involved going to faraway places, they were not intended to be travelogues, but a means of examining some "serious issues, in more or less exotic locations, and having some fun along the way". If the accompanying book is anything to go by, however, this is nonetheless exactly what they are: travelogues, but travelogues with attitude.

Our Man In... has an engaging style, some terrible puns, and some marvellously scatological jokes. As always with the BBC it is beautifully produced and illustrated — so much so that it is tempting to agree with Anderson that for all his efforts most people will probably buy this book for the photographs.

KATIE HICKMAN

Gang battles on the Net

MASTERS OF DECEPTION
By Joshua Quittner
and Michelle Slatalla
Vintage, £6.99

and socially inept teenagers. brighter than the other kids in their inner-city classes, who had a way with computers. They managed, through nights spent staring into monitor screens, to learn how to break into other computers. They shared the knowledge over the Net. They formed gangs, started cyberspace spats with other gangs. They stole a little free telephone

time, crashed a couple of systems and, rarely, sold the information to real criminals.

The secret service discovered their crimes, prosecuted them, caught them, prosecuted them. A couple served short jail sentences: all of them became heroes to other whey-faced teenagers.

Unfortunately Joshua Quittner and Michelle Slatalla do not seem to have enough faith in their intimately researched story to tell it straight. Instead, they come on with a stylistic cross between Hunter S. Thompson and a newly ordained vicar trying to curry favour in a youth club by talking a breathless teenspeak. And, in their self-aggrandising description of themselves as the Masters of Deception they have fallen rather too hard for their own hype.

JOHN DIAMOND

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Goa: the idyll is threatened

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By Sir Arthur Conan Doyle,
starring Sir John Gielgud
and Sir Ralph Richardson
Hodder Headline, £7.99
THESE rediscovered tapes feature the theatrical knights hamming up four of Holmes's most improbable adventures. Sir Ralph's Dr Watson is of the grunting variety, continually aghast and baffled by Sherlock's brilliance. Sir John enunciates his lines beautifully in this stagey 1950s production by Harry Alan Towers. Curiosity value only.

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Enchanted Tapes, £6.99
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PROPERTY

13

Builders welcome the new Stone Age

Quarries are reopening to satisfy demand, says
Alice Thomson

Real stone has had a rough time this century. First everyone wanted red brick, then concrete, steel, pebble dash and glass. Inside houses, the story has been the same. Kitchens have been smothered with plastic-topped tables, wooden units and tiled surfaces. Floors have gone from carpet to cork to wood to Seagrass (a stone floor was considered too cold). Limestone fireplaces have been boarded up or replaced by wooden or wrought-iron affairs.

But, having spent years in the wilderness, stone is back, and suddenly everyone is becoming Fred Flintstone, thinking of a thousand and one ways to use the original natural product.

Fed up with cracks, leaks and threadbare carpets, stone is seen as the ultimate durable. Like an Armani suit, it gets better with the wearing and is never brash. New five-star hotels no longer want their guests to sink into a red-carpeted hall when they can glide over granite, and it is likely checking-in will no longer be at a mahogany counter but at a limestone ledge. Marble baths are an option for the first time since Cleopatra.

It is not only Armani wearers who can afford real stone. Stone has become cheaper with new extraction methods, and modern techniques mean that even marble can be bent into extraordinary shapes. Local authority planners are now insisting that houses be built of local, natural materials, which usually means stone if you are living in areas such as the Cotswolds. Even shopping malls are discarding coloured concrete pedestrian areas for solid stone.

On a smaller scale, Habitat and Conran are beginning to sell limestone tables and desks. And farmers, with a little encouragement from the subsidy system, are going back to dry-stone walls. Stone restorers no longer fill in cracks with concrete but match up old samples with new quarries.

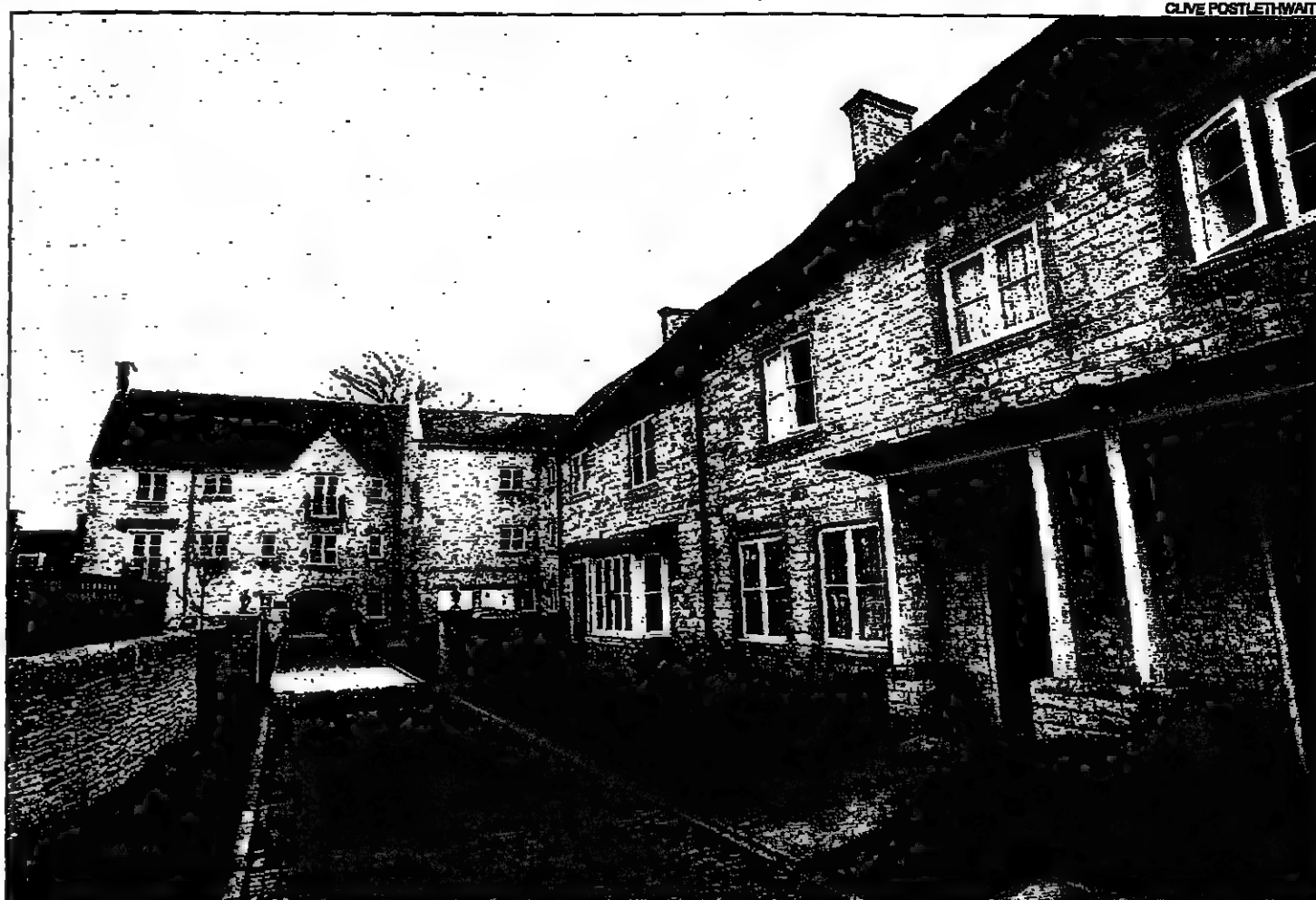
Next weekend see the first Real



Lasting stone at 18th-century Northwick Park, Gloucestershire



Slabs of Cotswold stone at Stanleys Quarry, Chipping Campden



Award-winning retirement cottages at Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire, built in "Campden" stone hewn from Stanleys Quarry

Stone Show at Wembley, west London. Dubbed "The Dawning of a New Stone Age", 3,000 people have already bought tickets, including building contractors, stonemasons, stone doctors, sculptors, restorers and local government planning architects. There is even a magazine, *The Stone Specialist*, for an industry in Britain that is worth £400 million a year.

Initially, the revival faced problems because Britain had closed many of its quarries and, often, the survivors had resorted to producing reconstituted stone, which involved hauling out the stone, smashing it into tiny pieces and moulding it back together again.

People who wanted real stone had to go to Portugal, Spain and France rather than to, say, the Cotswolds or Scotland. But now

quarries of all types, from slate to marble, have reopened in Britain.

Ian Bond, a farmer at Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire, is one of a group of new quarry owners opening up in the South. There had always been an old quarry on his estate but it was closed in the early 1950s and used as a rubbish tip until local masons and builders asked him to consider reopening it because they couldn't find any stone to match existing buildings in the village. First he had to get planning permission for the site, and then find someone who knew how to run a quarry. Four years later, Stanleys Quarry employs eight local men, one full-time stonemason, and a manager, Graham Mayo.

There are four beds of Cotswold stone, all from the Jurassic Age, but

only two are quarried, one producing a mature cheddar-cheese colour with a blue vein through it, and the other a harder, marbled Wensleydale colour. People can wash over them with blue or green tints, but this makes quarries wince.

We submit samples and the designers say they want the colour changed, "Mr Mayo says. "We have to explain that stone is not 'made' and that they can't have a bit of pink here and a bit of grey there. Stone comes out of the ground as it is, although we can tone down the colour with coffee or cow dung."

Quarry regulations are strict, the saws are vast and nothing gets wasted, even the spoil is sold for roads. At one end of the quarry,

workers smash smaller stones for dry-walling: in the middle, mechanical diggers extract hunks of raw stone; and at the end, rough bricks are chopped, and saws slice off two-inch thick paving stones. Elsewhere, plans for new projects are poured over.

John Ballantyne, a stonemason for 35 years who did a six-year apprenticeship, can make almost anything. "Stone balls and ramp-and-twist staircases are the hardest, because there is no room for error," he says. "Making birdbaths and sundials is boring, but I enjoy a good lintel or fireplace."

Mr Bond, who has been told that there is about 200 years worth of quarrying in his seam says: "The quarry doesn't overlook anyone's land and is surrounded by trees, so it is considered environmentally

friendly by locals, who use the "Campden" stone on barns and for new housing estates because it mellows quickly and blends in."

It has taken him a while to break even but now he can't keep up with demand, and had a £400,000 turnover last year.

"We did the pillars for the Hyde Park gates for the Queen Mother's birthday present in 1993, we have done floors in Scotland, and hope to move into the American market, so that the tourists can take back a piece of the Cotswolds as a fireplace."

This particular stone has been used on St Paul's Cathedral and at several country estates, so we are often asked to do renovation work.

"But quarrying can still be an uphill battle. The county council still insists on shipping in stone from Portugal for kerbstones."

STONE FACTS

□ Stanleys Quarry, Westington Hill, Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire (01386 700667).

□ The Stone Federation, 18 Mansfield Street, London W1M 9FG (0171-580 5404) can provide a list of quarries and stone manufacturers.

□ *The Stone Specialist* is printed monthly by the publishers Herald House (01903 521082). The annual subscription is £29.

□ "The First Natural Stone Show" is at the Wembley Exhibition Centre, west London, from Feb 28 to Mar 2, 10am-5pm daily. For further information ring 01844 342894.



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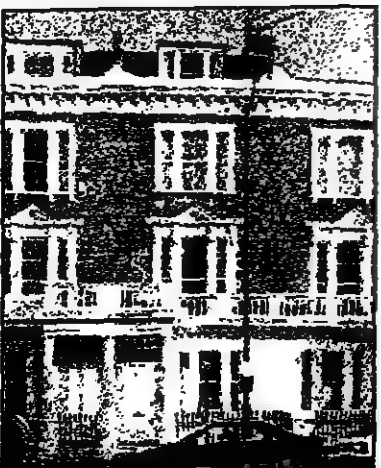
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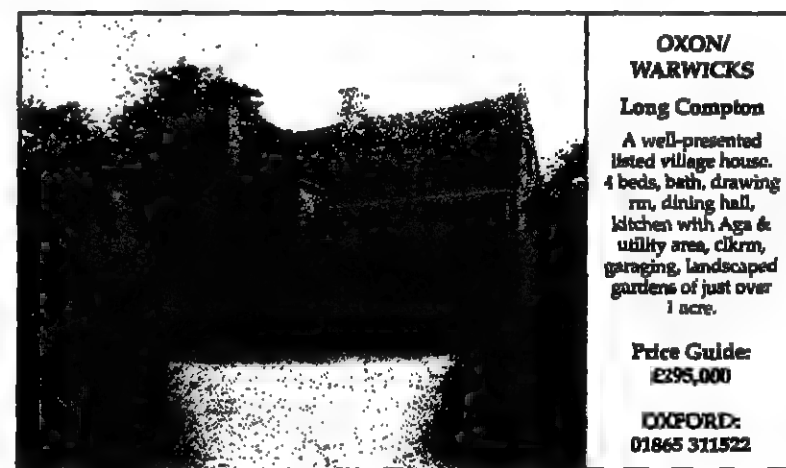
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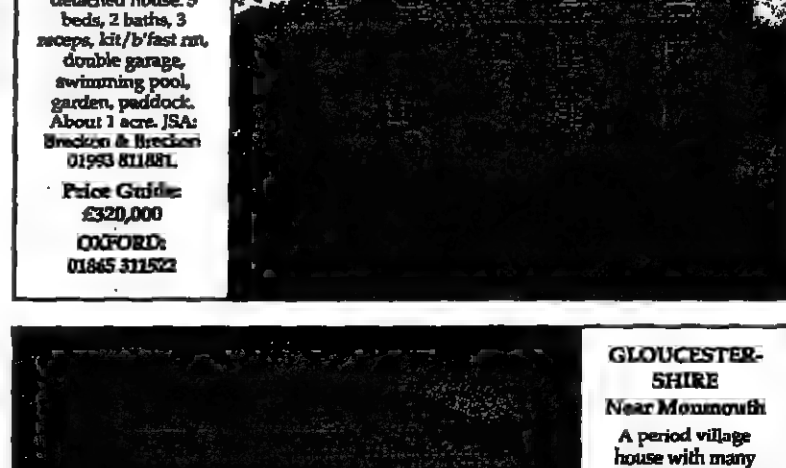
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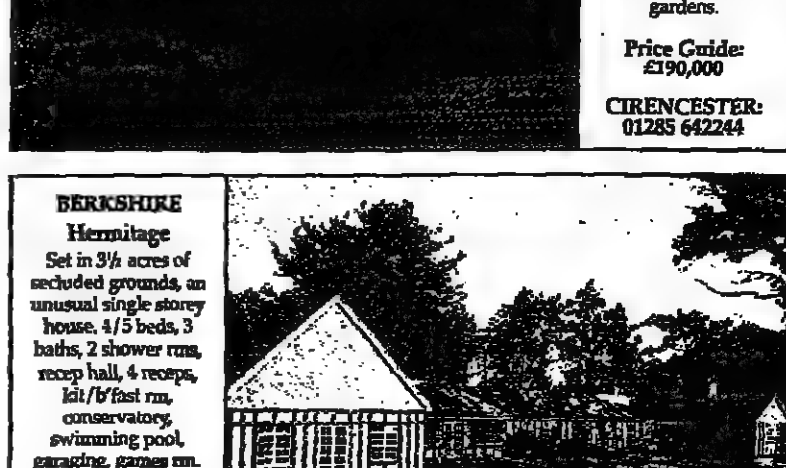
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OXFORDSHIRE Claxfield
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GLoucester-shire Near Monmouth
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Price Guide: £190,000
CIRENCESTER: 01285 642244



BERKSHIRE Henley
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Price Guide: £385,000
NEWBURY: 01635 523225

CARIBBEAN: Libby Purves and her family discover a yachting Eden in the British Virgin Islands

The sweet life at Bitter End

The inter-island plane was late; we had spent a long, stranded afternoon on Antigua being overcharged for vile Jamaican pop and nagged to have our hair plaited. At last we flew on to Beef Island, failed to land in a freak storm, and were taken back 200 miles to Antigua, where everybody, from immigration officials to hoteliers, was in a uniformly filthy mood following a national anti-tax demonstration.

This is not, you understand, a complaint. Things could not have turned out better. By the time we reached our real destination—the Bitter End Yacht Club on Virgin Gorda—we had been reminded of everything that can go wrong with Caribbean holidays, from hot concrete hotels to surly put-upon locals, wannabe Shirley Valentines snogging on the beach with big reggae boys, and pelicans despondently fishing up condoms. We had been reminded that you can't confidently order a holiday in paradise, and probably don't deserve one.

But Eden did, after all, exist. The British Virgin Islands, a scatter of volcanic green and grey, have been lucky compared to their American-owned neighbours. Nearby St



Thomas has bloomed into rackety nightlife and petty crime next to it, mountainous Tortola and Virgin Gorda have slept on, rustic and friendly as the west of Ireland.

You can walk into Mr Harrigan's village shop in Gun Creek for a packet of crisps, and he will chat to you and show you his ancestors' private all-Harrigan graveyard on the waterfront, for all the world as if you were a fellow human and not a unit of tourism. Waiting at Beef Island airport you can dump your luggage, greet the airport hen and her chicks, turn left past the airport goat and her kids, and blow along the beach for a tortilla at De Loose Mongoose. I could drift around Tortola quite happily for days.

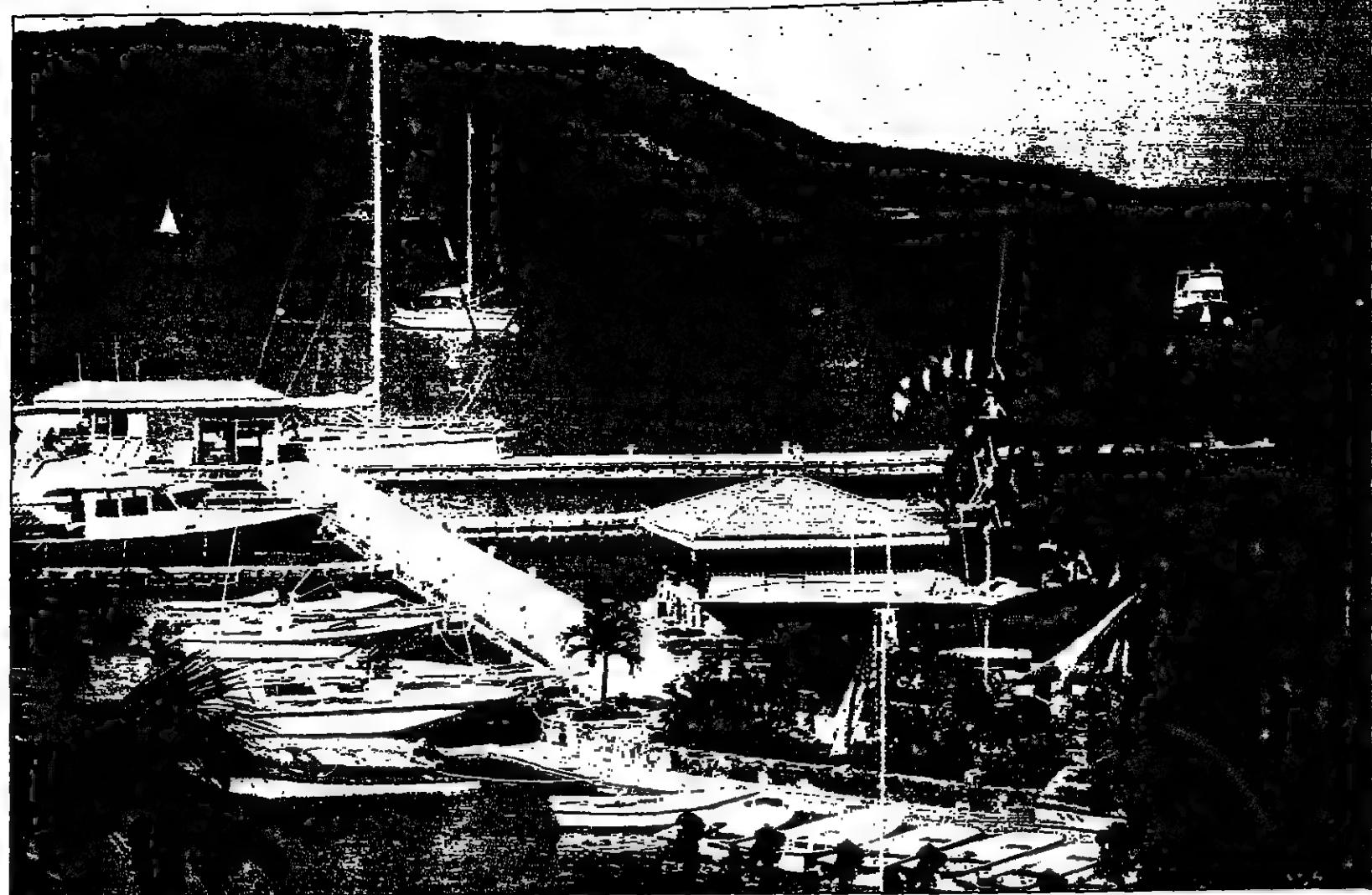
But this time, pale and weary from a Suffolk winter, we withdrew from real life and never strayed far from Bitter End. This group of villas around a clubhouse overlooks

the ring of islands which shelter North Sound, Gorda. You can get there only by boat.

In 1975 Myron Holden, a Chicago industrialist, bought the beach for his family holidays and he still oversees every detail himself: the food is straightforward, the decor amiably oddball. The black, piratical iron lanterns throw just enough of a dramatic gleam into the deep-brooding tropical night, and a whale skeleton is arranged, as if by accident, on the white sand of the foreshore just to make you feel good.

The resort, much visited by long-distance boats, claims a "yacht club atmosphere", which is confusing to anyone used to the smell of mildewed oilskins which constitutes a British yacht club's atmosphere. They must mean the American sort. But, upmarket though it is, its direction is childlike.

Bitter End's mission is,



The answer to a yachtsman's prayer, where families can join in the fun swooping around in a wide range of boats and exploring the islands

without incongruous luxury, to fulfil the daydreams of sailors. A hundred boats, most of them provided free within the holiday package, lie waiting. There is a sailing school if you want it; even if you don't, kindly boatmen put the sails up for you.

In the shelter of the Sound we swooped around on Sunfish, windsurfers, kayaks,

keelboats. Lasers and outboard dories, landing occasionally at Saba islet for a drink with Ed Kilbride's parrot in the front room of his bar.

To go further, we chartered a Freedom 30 and sailed out on to the long Atlantic waves; we took the free daily snorkel trips to float wonderingly over fine coral at Necker and Anegada. A few painted Alan-

Whicker women were observed to lie on the beach all week in an obvious trade-off for their husbands' ecstatic boating orgy; but we could hardly keep still for excitement, and did everything.

There are air-conditioned villas, with telephones, overlooking the anchorage, which some visitors demand. But, knowing a bunch of romantic

Britishers when they see one coming, the management put us out on the point by the open sea, in a wooden cabin set high among the trees. There, where the northeast trades help the silent ceiling fans to cool the quiet, shuttered rooms, we lay in hammocks under the palm-thatch of our balcony at dusk, smelling hot rope and hot decking and watching the empty ocean over which Columbus came.

It says a lot for the peace of the BVIs that we were able to feel the past. The Caribbean is as much a part of European history as Venice: we reflected on what wealth the Old World explorers—and planters and slavers and pirates—found here, and on their legacies good and evil.

We were glad we took the children. Friends had said we were mad, that Caribbean holidays were for grown-ups. We found that, for school-age children, it was one of those expensive treats that will be worth it all their lives, fixing images, smells and sounds to bring geography and history to life.

We met pelicans, iguanas, turtles; clambered through granite caves, swam in the warm vivid ocean with the parrotfish and watched the

sun go down with a green tropical flash.

Idly, I told the children what our friends had said. Ten-year-old Rose exploded: "What sort of twisted mind," she inquired, "would go to a pirate island and leave their child behind?" A deep question. Inner child and outer children all did well. We are saving for the next time.

Getting there

□ The author was a guest of the BWIA airline and of the Bitter End Yacht Club. The club (UK telephone 0800 591897) offers packages from £2,170 for two people. Discounts of 25 per cent for families operate in summer.

□ British Virgin Islands Tourist Board, 110 St Martin's Lane, London WC2N 4DY (0171-240-4259).

□ Other tour operators offering holidays to the British Virgin Islands include Caribbours (0171-581 3517) and the BVI Club (0952 220477).

CARIBBEAN TRAVEL TIPS

□ Caribbours (0171 581 3517) offers holidays in Barbados, Anguilla, St Lucia, Grenada, the Grenadines, St Kitts & Nevis and the Virgin Islands. Prices range from £616 per person for seven nights (low season) at the 4-star Rex Halcyn Cove Hotel in Antigua (accommodation only) with return flights from Gatwick, to £5,640 per person for seven nights next Christmas for a suite at the 5-star Cap Juluca resort in Anguilla, including breakfast and return flights from Gatwick.

□ Packages to St Lucia offered by Caribbours include six nights at the 4-star Eastwinds Inn for £1,098 per person, with all meals and return flights from Gatwick. Between February 28 and April 7, one child under 12 sharing with two adults gets free accommodation, meals and drinks. Flights from £410.

□ Caribbean Connection (01244 341131) offers a sports and cultural festival on Barbados in March and April, including opera, horse-racing, cricket, yachting and polo. Prices from £317 per person for seven nights, including B&B at the 3-star Buccaneer Bay hotel and return flights.

□ Abercrombie & Kent (0171 730 9600) has holidays at the Montpelier Plantation Inn on Nevis from £936 (low season) to £1,987 (Christmas) per person for seven nights B&B, including flights.

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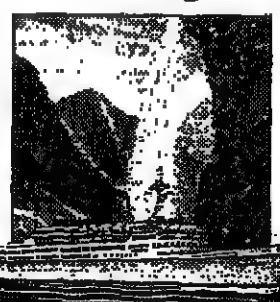
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TRAVEL

15

WEEKEND BREAK: Skiing in France, sightseeing in Geneva — what better way to celebrate one's 60th birthday?

Into the Vallée on wobbly knees

In retrospect it was probably not a good idea, but it seemed so at the time. My 60th birthday was imminent and, although I could not hope to match the achievement of a younger colleague who marked his half century by climbing Kilimanjaro, I felt I should at least make some attempt to deny the passing years.

The opportunity presented itself with an invitation to spend a weekend in Geneva. That was not in itself much of a challenge, but the itinerary included a day across the border at Chamonix, and the chance to ski the famous Vallée Blanche from the Aiguille du Midi on the Mont Blanc massif.

The Vallée is not a difficult run. Much of it consists of broad, open snowfields interspersed with a few narrow gullies. The most alarming feature is the presence of crevasses, indicating that it is a huge glacier. On sunny days, such as we enjoyed, these can be spotted and avoided, though our guide warned that it was no place for beginners in poor visibility.

The Vallée may not be hard to negotiate, but it is long: about 24 kilometres (15 miles) from the pinnacles of the Aiguille to the valley floor. It is slightly less distance to the top of the railway which shuttles down to Chamonix: we were obliged to complete our journey by train because snow on the lower slopes was becoming scarce.

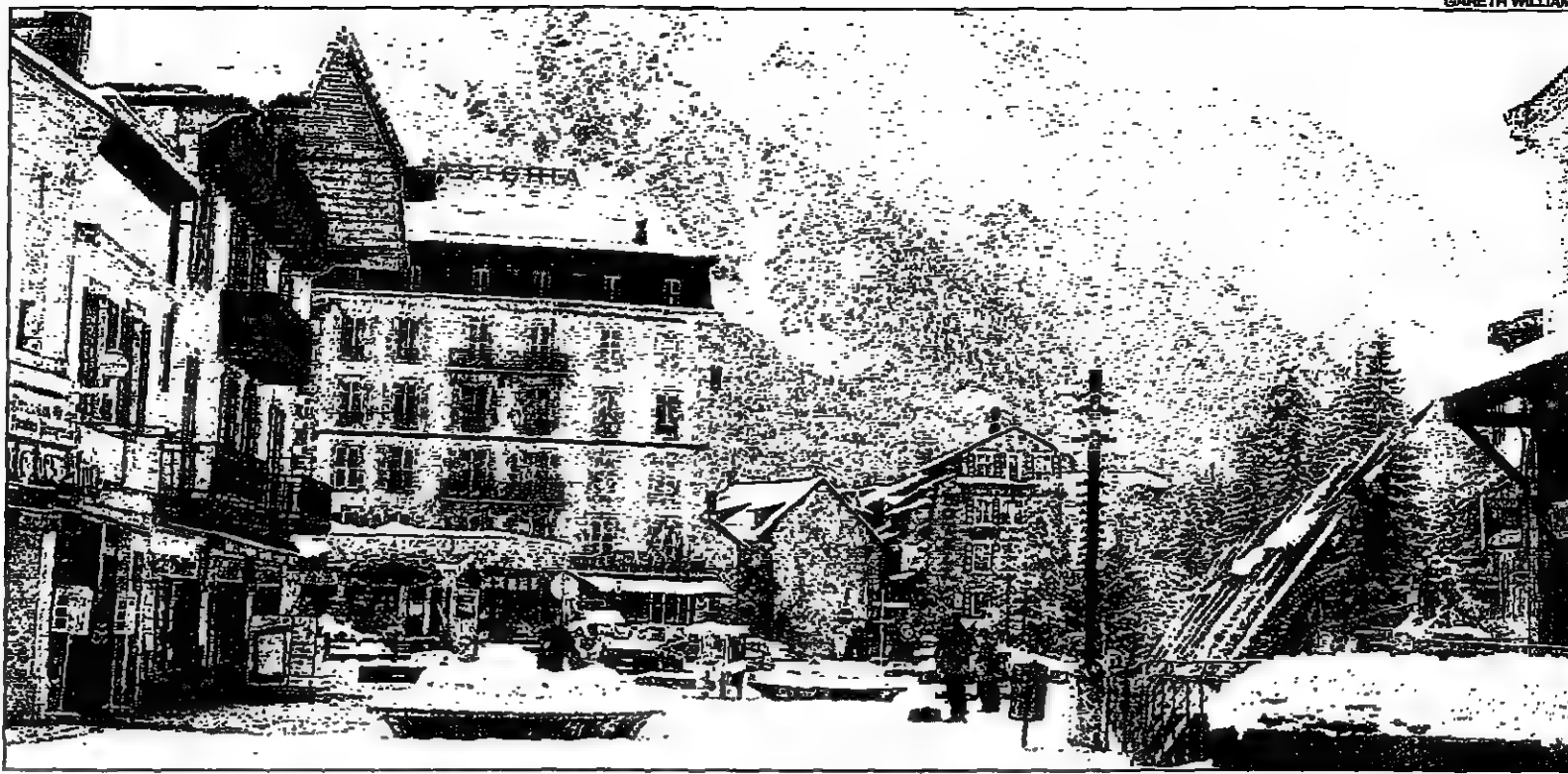
The top of the run is also formidably high at 3,790 metres (about 12,500ft) and is

reached by two spectacular cable-car ascents. The first phase of the descent is down a vertiginous series of steps, carrying skis and clutching a rope handrail. By the time we reached a flatish bit where we could attach skis, I was suffering from a mixture of fright and altitude sickness.

For the remainder of the run I was decidedly wobbly-kneed and, despite the kindness of my companions and the felicitations when we finally reached base, I felt I had made a bit of an ass of myself. Moral: silly old fools, even if they imagine themselves to be experienced skiers, should not go most of the way to the top of the highest mountain in Europe without any practice or acclimatisation, clamp on skis for the first time for two years and expect to do themselves or the mountain justice.

Geneva itself, however, was a surprise and a delight. Its reputation has suffered from the fact that it is Swiss and must, therefore, be staid and boring. Foreigners tend to see it as distinguished for nothing more than the manufacture of chocolates and expensive timepieces; as the home of an extravagant international bureaucracy; and as a prohibitively expensive watering hole for tax exiles and jet-setters.

But such assumptions are wrong. Although small by contemporary standards, it has a long and fascinating history, from its beginnings as a Celtic settlement, a Roman fortress and one of the earliest



Chamonix is a popular winter destination. Many skiers are drawn there by the famous Vallée Blanche, much of which consists of broad, open snowfields

and most powerful bishoprics of an expanding Christendom. In the 16th century it transformed itself into the centre of the Reformation and proclaimed itself a republic, the "Protestant Rome", the home of Calvin and of many other refugees from religious and intellectual persecution. With the French empire on its doorstep, it remained persistently at odds with both monarchies and dictatorships, described by Napoleon as "that city where they know English too well". Among its later temporary denizens was Vladimir Ilyich Lenin.

A handsome, relaxed city with a heritage of splendid buildings, Geneva does justice to its glorious lakeside setting. It has some fine churches, nearly 30 museums and galleries, an opera house, the world-famous Orchestre de la Suisse Romande and a literary tradition that includes Byron, Victor Hugo, Balzac, Alexander Dumas and George Sand.

As "the world's smallest metropolis" — with only 175,000 inhabitants, although many more thousands commute from neighbouring towns and villages and from across the French border — it is ideal for walking. As well as

the lakeside, there are numerous parks and gardens and, perhaps best of all, the delightful old town which surrounds the cathedral, long stripped of its treasures by Protestant zealots.

For me the only blot is the presence of the United Nations, housed in a complex of bulky modern buildings on a hillside overlooking the lake. All those international civil servants with their tax-free salaries and lavish expense accounts may have done wonders for the local economy, but the sceptic must question their function. What do all those people housed within the vast headquarters of the International Labour Organisation actually do?

JOHN YOUNG

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 21

FLUBDUB

(b) A splendid 19th-century slang word vividly expressing bombastic language without much content. Goes with *flimflam* (humbug, idle talk). "Did you hear him on NewsNight? Just the same old politician's flubdub."

OBAMULATE

(a) To wander or walk about in an aimless fashion. The locomotion of a male spouse in a DIY shed, or of a female spouse in a department store.

"For heaven's sake, where has your father got off to now? He has gone obamulating again, just when it's time to go home."

HAMADRYAD

(b) This word has several different meanings. In its original Greek it meant a nymph who lived in trees. It has been adopted to mean a venomous Indian snake and an Abyssinian baboon. So you can use the word to insult a woman, but, when taken to task, explain that you were using it in its nymphal sense. Or vice versa.

RAMPALLION

(a) A bold, forward, rampant, or wanton woman: a woman who romps. An Elizabethan term. So Falstaff to Mistress Quickly in *Henry IV, Part II, Act II, Scene I*: "Away, you scoldion; you rampallion; you fustilarian! I'll tickle your catastrophe." A fustilarian is a fussy-lugs or beastly, stutish woman. A catastrophe in Falstaffian slang is a posterior.

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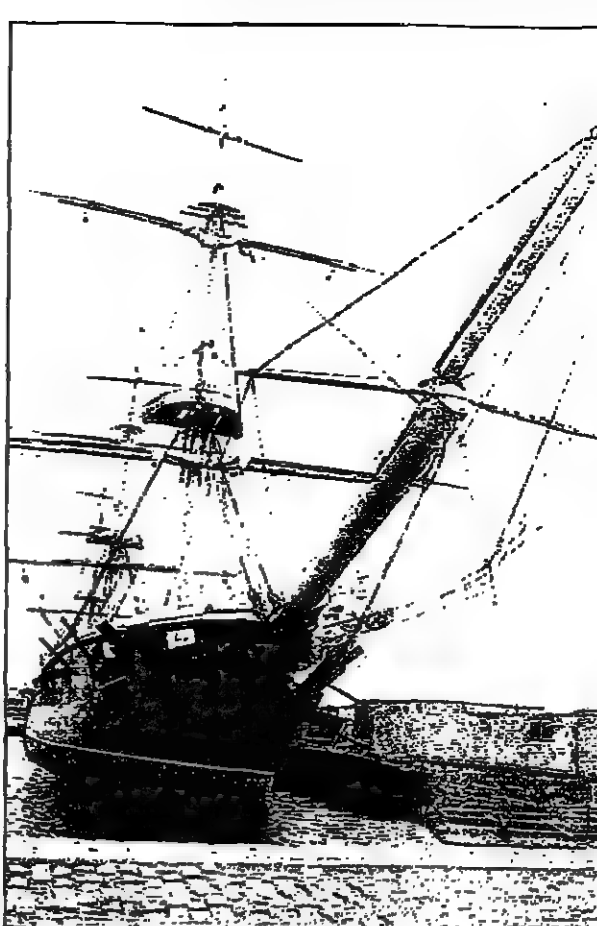
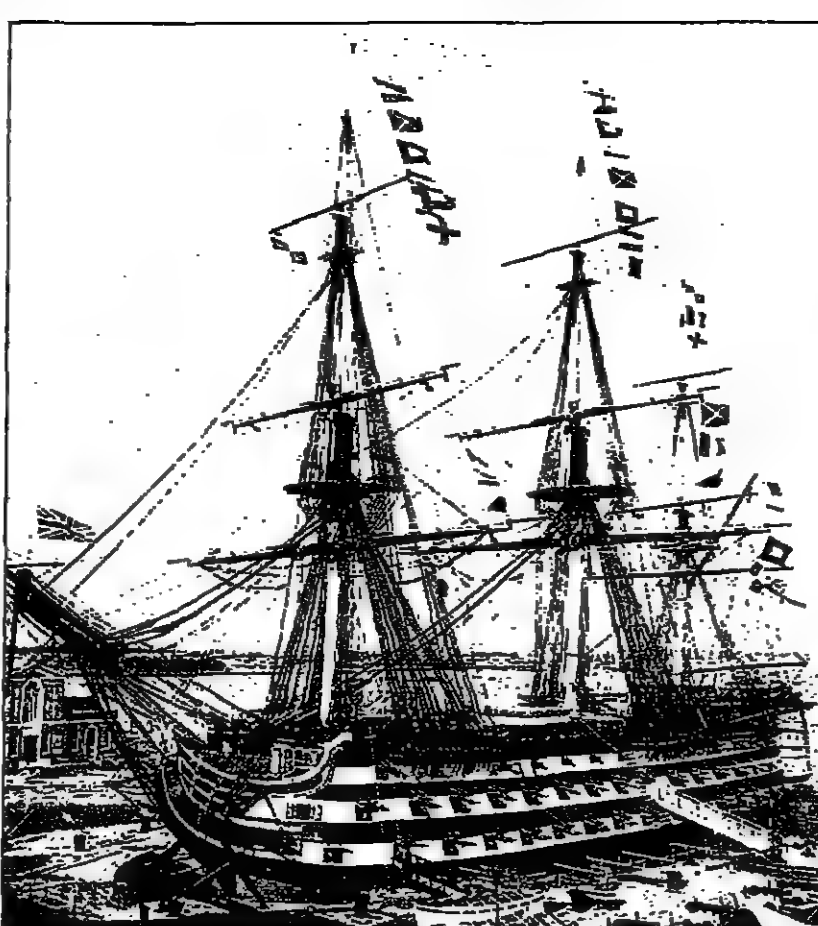
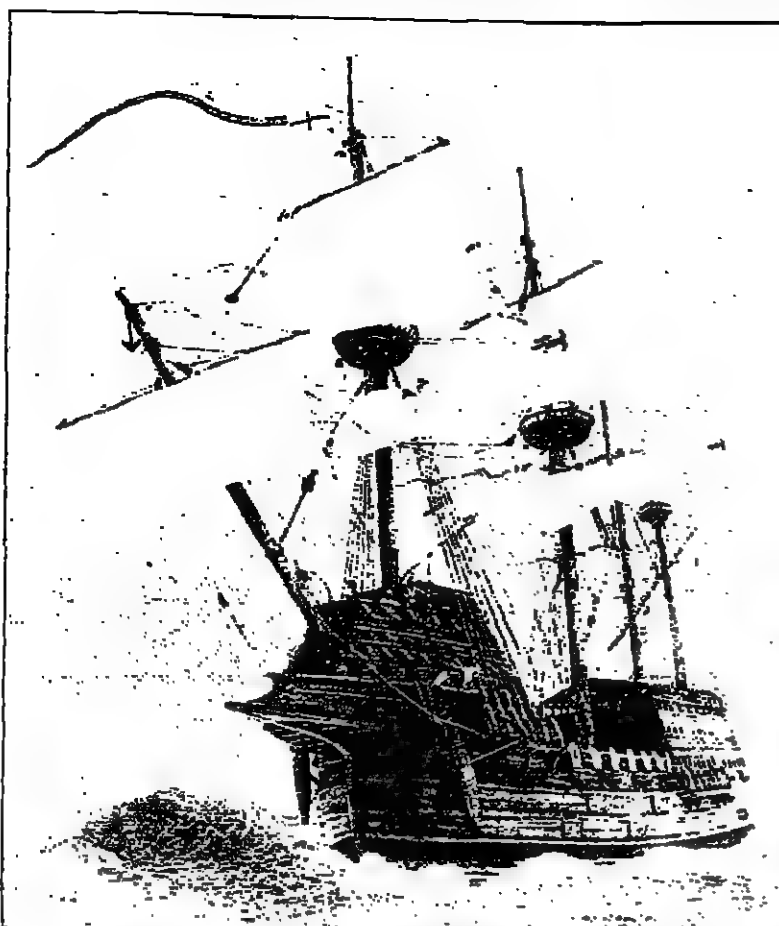


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PORTSMOUTH: Explore Britain's naval heritage with the family as a final half-term treat



A journey through British naval history: from left, an artist's impression of the 16th-century *Mary Rose*; the 18th-century *HMS Victory*; and *HMS Warrior*, the most formidable vessel afloat in Victorian times

Sailing back into history

Portsmouth is not a pretty city. To be frank, it is downright ugly, but what else can you expect? After several hundred years in the hands of the Royal Navy, months of attention by the German Luftwaffe in 1940-41 and a final assault by local planners in the postwar period, civic beauty can hardly be expected.

On the other hand, beauty is not everything. Look Portsmouth to neighbouring Southsea, exchange architectural charm for historical interest, and Portsmouth-Southsea becomes a very fine city indeed.

Portsmouth is a city with a theme. That theme is "Maritime History", and those who enjoy ships and the sea and all the excitement of a life on the ocean wave will find Portsmouth, with its plethora of maritime museums, a place that just has to be visited.

Moreover, museums have changed. The old style, with lots of glass cases and dusty exhibits, has given way to a hands-on, interactive version, with something of interest for all the family. That said, it pays to be selective. There are at least 14 maritime-related museums in the Portsmouth-Southsea area and taking the family round that lot would require a second mortgage.

The best way to tackle them is chronologically. The first ship to see is the *Mary Rose*, the flagship of Henry VIII's navy, which sank in the Solent 450 years ago when sailing to fight the French. It was hauled to the surface in 1982 and remains a 16th-century time-capsule, full of Tudor artefacts, from cutlery to longbows, most of which are on display.

The salvaged hull of the *Mary Rose* rests in a carefully controlled environment in Portsmouth Dockyard. From there it is no distance to the splendours of *HMS Victory*, Nelson's flagship at Trafalgar in 1805. The Royal Navy guides show you where Nelson fell and where he died.

Moving along to the 1860s,

and moored outside the Dockyard gates, is *HMS Warrior*, a fine example of a late-Victorian warship. In her day she was the largest, fastest and most formidable vessel afloat. Now restored and refitted she is a glorious sight, a perfect reminder of the Victorian navy.

Apart from these warships there is the Royal Naval Museum, the Historic Dockyard itself and a hands-on exhibit, "The Dockyard Apprentice", which brings the story of the Royal Navy up to 1911.

A naval buff could easily spend a whole day in and around the dockyard, but the rest of the family will probably get mutinous around lunchtime. To fend that off, head for Southsea. The resort has a long, pebble beach, a busy pier, a leisure centre, a park and lots of restaurants. Once the family has been fed and watered, the tour can be resumed with a call on the Royal Marines. The 300-year history of that corps — including its ten Victoria Crosses — is on view in the former officers' mess at Eastney Barracks. A range of displays, featuring Commando training and the Falklands War, plus music and weapons and audio films, cover the history of the Marines from 1664 in great detail. When all that has been seen, there is a tearoom to enjoy.

Passing back through Portsmouth and over the Gosport ferry, continue your tour at the Submarine World museum. This pulls in the crowds with a full-size submarine, *HMS Alliance*, which is parked rather than moored outside a main building full of more have-a-go displays. When the hatches are closed to start the tour, the submarine becomes somewhat claustrophobic for some people, but most children will love it.

If the weather looks bleak and the beach less than inviting, a day or two in Portsmouth offers a great chance for the family to explore Britain's maritime heritage.

ROBIN NEILLANDS

Fact file

- Details of opening times and admission prices for all Portsmouth museums from the Portsmouth Tourist Board (01705 826722).
- Tickets covering the three historic ships and the Naval Dockyard attractions (£13, children £8.25, senior citizens £11.50). A family ticket (two adults and up to four children) costs £33. Discount tickets available for other museums.
- The Royal Marines Museum (01705 819385): £3, children £1.50, senior citizens £2.
- In May, August and September, Portsmouth will stage services, events and, in August and September, parades to commemorate VE/VJ Day and the British Pacific and East Indies Fleet. Details for VE/VJ Day from Capt Jim Rayner, the Royal Naval Association, 82 Chelsea Manor Street, London SW3 5QJ (0171 352 6764); British Pacific Fleet events: Lyn Burke, British Chamber of Shipping, Carthusian Court, 12 Carthusian Street, London EC1M 6EB (0171 417 8400).
- Robin Neillands, a former Royal Marine, is the author of *The Conquest of the Reich: D-Day to VE Day*, just published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson (£30).



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GREEK ISLANDS: A voyage of discovery through the sunny Cyclades, from Mykonos to Santorini

By schooner to an idyll

With a near-barren landscape baked bronze by the sun, white-painted churches and clutches of windmills all standing back from the harbour, Mykonos conjures the idealised version of a Greek island. And it is as good a starting place as any to cruise the Cyclades islands.

Alternatives to the island's guesthouses have blossomed in or near the little port of Ornos Bay, ten minutes from Mykonos town. Overlooking the bay, the luxury-class Santa Marina hotel stands in 200 acres of splendid isolation, its villas and apartments, salt-water pool, fitness centre and tennis courts draping the hillside above the beach.

Behind the harbour of Mykonos town is a maze of narrow streets, where every corner reveals a new perspective: a tiny square, shaded by a fig tree; white-washed steps leading up to the balconies of houses with doors, window frames and shutters painted in the traditional blue or sepia, and where, in early morning, the scent of the geraniums mingles with that of the bakeries.

The most spectacular point of reference is the church of Paraportiani (meaning "many gates"), which comprises four chapels on varying levels forming one sparkling white church on the site of an old Venetian fortress.

The church is one of the gateways to Alekantra, or "little Venice". This old Venetian quarter juts out in a promontory whose foundations are lapped, sometimes lashed, by the sea. It has more than a dozen bars, which come to life in the evening as people gather to watch the sunset.

The Caprice is the smartest and noisiest; Montparnasse, the most peaceful and relaxed. The shops, too, come alive in the evening, especially the scores of jewellers.

Among the specialist shops

are Apocalypse, where craftsmen make copies of icons using tempera and gold leaf, and Parafilo, which, using a combination of pewter, zinc and brass, creates bowls, platters and other objets.

One of the best restaurants is the Carrine. The owner's mother does the cooking: a piquant sauce of various fish, along with island staples such as stuffed vine leaves, artichokes, zucchini and a superb seafood risotto.

Emerging from the buzz of the restaurant at 1.30am, crowds thronged the narrow streets, and music tapes blared from the bars. I was glad to be staying at the Santa Marina.

Early next day, we sailed from Ornos Bay in a handsome 60ft schooner bound for Santorini, now officially known by its ancient name Thera, or Thira, by the Greeks. Our call first port of call

was Naxos, where Theseus abandoned Ariadne.

In contrast to most Cycladic ports, of which it is the biggest, Naxos bustles with business-like dredgers and tankers, caiques and fishing boats. It is also famed for its craftsmen. On the street behind the lively, café-lined waterfront is a shop that sells copies of traditional Cycladic sculptures and figurines. On the street corner is a window crammed with conserves and Kitron, a lemon-based liqueur which is obtainable only here.

Sailing on, it was a couple of hours and several drinks later before we dropped anchor at the tiny island of Iraklia. To swim in cool waters was a delight, and in the meantime the solitary taverna on the bluff above was alerted to provide lunch for our party of ten.

We sat at one long table as the local treats arrived, with pitchers of chilled retsina. There were olives, salads, snails (whose wine-infused juices were mopped up with crusty bread), pasta, whitebait and roast chicken with chips.



Tiny, domed, white-washed churches overlooking stretches of deep-blue sea are a lasting symbol of the Greek islands

How to get there

□ The author was a guest of Argo Holidays, 100 Wigmore Street, London W1H 9DR (0171 331 7070), which specialises in Greece and its islands. A 12-day, half-board, schooner, or caique, cruise through the islands costs £595-£655 per person including scheduled flights.

□ Tailor-made holidays on yachts and cruisers can also be organised. Two-week holidays at the Santa Marina hotel on Mykonos cost from £1,089-£1,329, and from £955-£1,409 at the Vedema hotel on Santorini.

wine bar, the other the main restaurant. Here, with candles on the tables and Verdi on the tape deck, we dined in some splendour. The chefs have been apprenticed to some of the best restaurants in London, and the food — all based on local ingredients such as scallops, shrimp and sea bream — is deliciously light and inventive. The meal was accompanied by a fruity yet astringent local white wine, Assyrtiko.

Awakened by the sound of church bells, I stood on my balcony, overlooking the striped vineyards under a sky of breathtaking clarity. But Santorini's climate is such that a can of magnifying glass, with its light, humid mist over the vines — and melt away as quickly as it came.

Beaches are not the main attraction of this island, but the Hotel Vedema has a private stretch near by where the black, volcanic sand is boarded-over to accommodate sunbeds and a beach bar.

The riddle of Atlantis aside, Santorini was an important Minoan settlement until, in the first of many recorded natural disasters. It was all but blown to pieces in the earthquake and subsequent volcanic eruption of about 1450 BC. The resulting tidal wave destroyed much of the Minoan civilisation of Crete.

Visually, Santorini's west coast is one long, curved cliff face, striped with colours which vary from pale pink through grey to amber, depending on the light, and some of the buildings trickle over the top into little clefts. The town of Thira (now called Fira, or Phira) is a pretty little white place whose Cycladic architecture resembles that of Mykonos, save for the more flamboyant, fondant-coloured church domes and the beautiful bell towers to be seen in this and every settlement of any size: a particularly fine

example bestrides the main street in Megalohori.

Thera both suffers and profits from the hordes of tourists. But cut through the streets to the cliff path, near the Atlantis Hotel, and you begin to appreciate the beauty and drama of the setting, overlooking the ancient caldera, or volcanic crater, whose dark-blue waters are about 1,300ft deep.

In contrast to the rock and pop of Mykonos, there is classical music and grand opera at Franco's bar. As you sip the house special, a heady, champagne-based cocktail named Callas, you can almost hear the voice of the diva.

It was after dark when we reached Ia (Oia), Santorini's northernmost village. Around the start of the century, it was the most important village of the island, prosperous in trade and shipping, and possessed some hand-on some sea captain's houses and wineries. The earthquake of 1956 caused severe damage, but it has been faithfully restored and carries on a much more traditional way of life than Thera.

Ia is less accessible and quieter than the rest of the island, but has some shops and restaurants of quality. Our choice was the Koukou-mavalos which, apart from some delicious, French-accented food such as stuffed crêpes, possessed spell-binding views. Across the curve of the island, the lights of Thera and Megalohori looked like pendants of yellow diamonds.

For a longer stay in Ia (or a week split between here and Megalohori) the Perivolos hotel is another quite different conversion of an old-style winery. Each of its 16 double rooms are vaulted and white-washed, with kitchenette and private balcony. A pool, with a bar, overlooks the waters of the caldera, and the town and its restaurants are five minutes' walk away.

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GAMES

21

CHESS

by Raymond Keene

In chess it is possible for one to play against many, in a so-called "simultaneous display". For example, in Oxford in 1973 I took on 100 different opponents all at once, walking around the inside edges of a giant square formed by the chessboards of my opponents.

The "simul", which is chess shorthand for such demonstrations by masters or grandmasters, has proved to be a valuable fund-raiser for charitable purposes. Teams who challenge a champion under such circumstances can raise pledges from backers amongst their friends and family, based on the number of moves each game lasts.

Charities which have benefited from chess simul in the past include the World Wide Fund for Nature, the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children and the Sick Children's Trust, which was the official charity of The Times World Chess Championship in 1993.

Now, Save the Children is about to benefit from an ambitious event hosted by London solicitors Watson, Farley & Williams, to be staged at the Royal Automobile Club in Pall Mall next Saturday. Ten British champions, past and present, among them Jon Speelman, Jonathan Mestel, Cathy Forbes and myself will take on 100 players in four consecutive rounds.

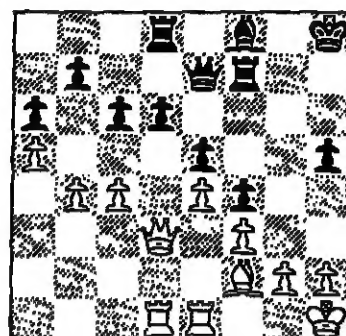
The champions' team was largely put together by Henry Muckin of the RAC Chess Circle, while Barry Martin, the official artist of the 1993 World Chess Championship and captain of the Chelsea Arts Club side, has assembled a squad of chessplaying celebrities to take on the masters.

Among those taking up the challenge are Michael Stern, MP, and Donald Woods, the hero of Richard Attenborough's film, *Cry Freedom*. Woods will be a formidable opponent, having gained valuable experience against no less a player than Anatoly Karpov, the champion of the World Chess Federation.

In this game, Black puts up stern resistance before finally crumbling to the champion's superior technique.

White: Anatoly Karpov
Black: Donald Woods
Simultaneous Display,
Lucerne 1977
Pirc Defence

1	d4	d8	2	d4	Nf6
3	Nc3	g6	4	Nf3	Nc6
5	Bd2	O-O	6	O-O	Nc6
7	c5	Ne5	8	Nd4	a6
9	Re1	Ned7	10	a4	Nc5
11	Bf1	e5	12	dxc6	fxe6
13	b4	a5	14	Nf3	Nc6
15	Bd4	Kf8	16	Ng5	Nc6
17	Bxg5	cx5	18	g5	h5
19	Bh4	g5	20	Bg3	Bg4
21	g3	h5	22	Qd3	Qe7
23	Bd1	Rd8	24	Bc3	B77
25	Bd7	Rd7	26	Bf2	Nf5
27	Ne2	N4	28	Nd4	g4
29	Q4	B8	30	Kf1	h5



Up to this point Black's defence has been solid, but this thrust indicates that Karpov has perceived a potential area of weakness. He swiftly follows up with a decisive penetration of the Black queen's flank.

31	b5	h4	32	h3	Rg7
33	Re2	Qf6	34	bxc6	Rxc6
35	Q5	Qg5	36	Be1	Rd7
37	Qc3	Rd7	38	cx6	Rxc6
39	Rd6	Rd6	40	Rd2	Rxd2
41	Bxd2	Qf6	42	Be1	Kf7
43	Qd4	Q5	44	Qd5	Qd6
45	Q7+	Bg7	46	Bd4	Qd6
47	Qx4	Kg6	48	Be7	Qd7
49	Bx5	Qc5	50	Qd5	Qxd5
51	exd5	Kf5	52	g4+	h3
53	Kg2	Kf4	54	g5	h3
55	Q7	Bd6	56	Bd6	Q4
57	h4				

Black resigns.

Anatoly Karpov has won the Chess Oscar awarded by the International Chess Writers Association for superlative performance in 1994, specifically his outstanding victory at the Linare tournament.

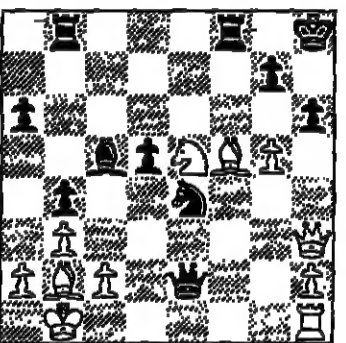
WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

This week's positions are all taken from Garry Kasparov's Puzzle Book (Cadogan £8.99). In Chiburdanidze - Larsen, Vienna 1993 White concluded the game with a brilliant combination. Can you spot the key first move?

Send your answers on a postcard to The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The first three correct answers drawn on Thursday will win a British Chess Magazine publication. The answer will be published next Saturday.

Last week's solution: 1 Ng5+



Last week's winners: H Drabble, Stanmore; Middlesex; J Jacometti, Hove; E Sussex; J F Hope-Smith, Eccles, Manchester.

PUNCHLINE

READERS are invited to write an amusing caption for the cartoon on the right. The cartoon, from the Punch library, includes the contemporary caption.

The cartoon will be printed again next week on the Games page with a caption selected from those submitted.

Caption suggestions, on a postcard please, should be addressed to: Cartoon caption 46, Weekend Games Page, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The editor's decision is final.

The closing date for entries is Wednesday, March 1.



A STAGE WHISPER FROM THE EXHIBITION.
"BUTLER FROM THE STAFFS!"



"Any friends of Batman are fine by me"

The winning caption for last week's cartoon (above) was submitted by James Fisher, of London SW19

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

FLUBDUB

- a. A sticky pudding
- b. Bombast
- c. A clumsy fellow

OBAMBULATE

- a. To wander around
- b. Partly obscured
- c. Knock-kneed

HAMADRYAD

- a. An Oriental drum
- b. A tree nymph
- c. A bouncy metre

RAMPALLION

- a. A bold woman
- b. A fairground slide
- c. A venomous snake

Answers on page 15

COMPUTER GAMES

THE DANK corridors of "Doom 2 - Hell on Earth" were clearly a favourite of 12-year-old Chris Jack of Newton Fareham, Hants. He wrote: "Doom 2 had everything - big guns, aliens, scant regard for human life and, of course, marvelous sound effects. 'Doom 2' is really just more of the same - but LOTS more. It has 30 original levels, six new monsters and a deadly new shotgun."

But Chris also concluded that the slick shoot-'em-up wasn't quite slick enough for its £35-plus price tag. He explained: "Makers of software could have been more inventive. What about some vehicles? More weapons? Grenades? 'Doom 2' has no real rivals and has to be the game of the year. It doesn't tax your intelligence or initiative - the most mentally difficult feature of the game is to know your rocket-firing range. The strategy isn't over-complicated, namely, kill people and scavenge off them!"

By comparison, sofie Ian Bentley of White Noddy, Essex, praised "Monkey Island" for its lack of violence. He wrote: "If you are like me and don't take the world too seriously, or use computer games to indulge in psychopathic violent

tendencies, then 'Monkey Island' could be what you are looking for. It's not new but you can now buy it so cheaply that it must represent the best value for money around."

"This is a graphic adventure game with a sense of humour in which you are a would-be pirate heading to the island to rescue the

heroine from the clutches of evil Captain Le Chuck. You must solve the usual puzzles, pick up and use objects and talk to characters to get information."

"So far, so run of the mill. But along with all this is an imaginative stream of jokes and genuinely funny situations which give the whole game a good-time feel. The characters are a motley mixture - from Stan the used-gallon salesman, to the gang of cannibals who are more civilised than anyone else. "No one gets killed and Monkey Island never forgets that it is just a game. It's all the better for it," he concluded.

These were just two of the many

entries for Cyberspace Twelve, asking for reviews of any new title in your collection. Now, without further ado, to announce our six winners.

Commiserations to our losers but congratulations to: Ian Bentley and Chris Jack; Timothy Pudge of Southampton; Jonathan Coupée of Cranbrook, Kent; Peter Walsh of Sunderland; and Mr K. Sartain of Crosby, Liverpool (whose entry comes under the microscope next week).

Each of our six winners will receive six titles from Empire Interactive boasting a dozen games in all - "Dawn Patrol - The First Air War", "Campaign II" and "Dreamweb" (on Cd-Rom) and "Award Winners Golf", "Award Winners Platinum" and "Combat Classics Two" (on floppy disc). Our losers should not lose heart as Cyberspace Thirteen is lurking just around the corner.

We always appreciate your inputs. Please send them to us, as always, at Computer Games, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London, E1 9XN. You can also fax us on 0171 729 6791.

TIM WAPSHOTT

BRIDGE

by Robert Sheehan

HOW would you set about this hand?

Dealer North Love-all Rubber bridge

1098
J32
A86
KJ84
N
W
E
S
AKJ2
K10865
Q9
A3

W	N	E	S
—	Pass	1♦	1♥
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
All pass			

Contract: Four hearts by South
Opening lead: four of diamonds

At one time it was automatic to double on hands like this. But over the last few years it has become the practice to overcall on quite strong hands if your shape is not ideal for a take-out double. The accepted strength range for an overcall is thus much wider than it used to be.

An "unassuming cue-bid" (UCB). It shows a high-card raise to at least Two Hearts. UCBs are useful for distinguishing between constructive raises and pre-emptive raises, and as you can see, have crept into the rubber bridge scene.

West leads the four of diamonds to the six and the king, and East returns a diamond to the queen, with West following with the three. You play a club to the king with the idea of starting hearts from dummy. East ruffs the king of clubs and returns another diamond. There seems to be little chance of making the contract if West is void in diamonds, so you discard the ace of clubs. West follows to the third round of diamonds. How do you proceed?

This should be your thought process:

1 When West follows to a third round of diamonds, that marks East with five. So what is East's shape? Clearly it has to be 4-4-5-0 (one more time, always spades hearts diamonds and clubs in that order) - as he is marked with eight cards in the majors he must have four of each. If he had a five-card major he would open One of that major in preference to One Diamond.

2 Where are the remaining high cards? So far we know that East has the king-jack of diamonds. To open the bidding he needs the ace of hearts and both major suit queens - or else he would only have ten points, hardly enough to open a 4-4-5-0, with the prospect of having to rebid Two Diamonds over a Two Club response. (Better with only ten points is to pass. You may be able to describe your hand later in one bid, for example by

making a take-out double of the opponents' club bids.)

So a reasonable construction of East's hand is:

♦Qxxx ♥AQxx ♦KJ10xx ♠—

Having gone through all this, you are now in a position to decide how to continue. The hypothetical situation is:

1098
J32
A86
KJ84
N
W
E
S
AKJ2
K10865
Q9
A3

You have lost two tricks and the lead is in dummy. Can you see how to arrange to lead twice through East's hearts and simultaneously avoid losing a spade trick? The critical play is to run the ten of spades. If East plays low you switch back to hearts, intending to play the ten if East plays low, and then re-enter dummy by ruffing the fourth round of spades to lead another trump. In practice East took the ace of hearts and played another spade; but the end-position was the same.

This was the full deal:

1098
J32
A86
KJ84
N
W
E
S
AKJ2
K10865
Q9
A3

There are two further points to note:

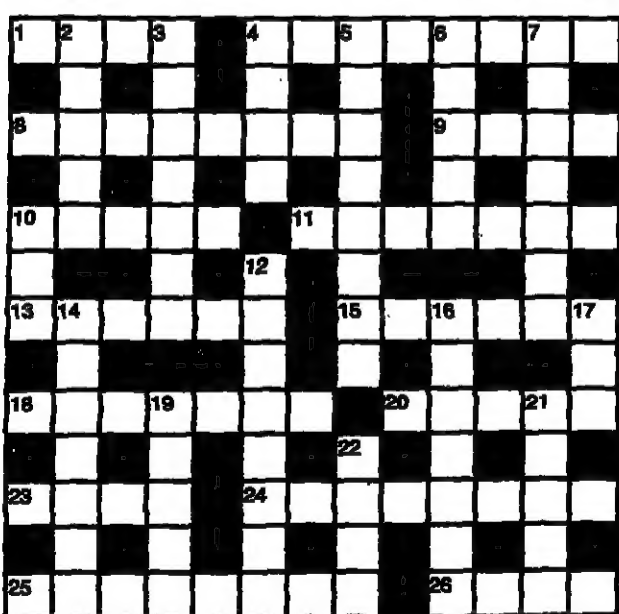
1 I rather glossed over the declarer's discard of the ace of clubs on the third round of diamonds. In fact that was a critical play - the declarer needed to keep four spades in hand in order to enter the dummy by ruffing the fourth round.

2 After East had ruffed the club there was no defence to beat the contract - a spade switch leads to the ending described above. Best play by East in the nine-card ending shown in the second diagram is the queen of hearts. South wins the king and plays the ten - East can duck this, but has to take the next round and give the dummy entry to take the spade finesse.

COMPETITION

THERE was a good entry for the "Suit Pairings" competition. The "bruised" was the most popular name for the black and blues (spade and new blue club). The winner will be announced next week.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 405

ACROSS

- 1 Insult deliberately (4)
- 4 Perfect final document (4,4)
- 8 Someone/thing exciting, titillating (3,5)
- 9 Repair (eg socks) (4)
- 10 Illness with high temperature (5)
- 11 Meantime (7)
- 13 Shriveled up (6)
- 15 System of flexible pipes (6)
- 18 Casual: unpremeditated (7)
- 20 Smallest amount (5)
- 23 New-born: tiny (4)
- 24 Stocky (8)
- 25 Eagerness, sharpness (8)
- 26 Unpolished; impolite (4)

DOWN

- 2 Loop with running knot (5)
- 3 Implore (7)
- 4 Vendetta (4)
- 5 Unlimited (8)
- 6 Obtain by begging (5)
- 7 A helping (7)
- 10 Only a small number (3)
- 12 Dark-haired girl (8)
- 14 Arouse, kindle (7)
- 16 Large wave: small water cask (7)
- 17 Obtrude (3)
- 19 Josef -, Austrian composer (5)
- 21 Lay out, use up (5)
- 22 Prejudice (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 404

ACROSS: 2 Snapshot 6 Cosser 8 Alarum 9 Sparing 10 Order 12 Start a hare 16 Sweet blood 18 Augur 20 Uranium 21 Legate 22 Girdle 23 Waterloo
DOWN: 1 Compute 2 Stone Age 3 Fallor 4 Hired 5 Timbre 7 Surprise 11 Recliner 13 Alter ego 14 Voluble 15 Wal-low 17 Writer 19 Gigor

CROSSWORD BOOKS: The Times Concise Crosswords (Books 1 & 2 £5.99 each), Books 3, 4, 5 & 6 NEW Book 7 £4.50 each. The Times Jumbo Crosswords (Books 1 & 2 £5.99 each), Concise Book £5.99. The Times Crosswords: 1 Compute 2 Stone Age 3 Fallor 4 Hired 5 Timbre 7 Surprise 11 Recliner 13 Alter ego 14 Voluble 15 Wal-low 17 Writer 19 Gigor. The Sunday Times Crosswords - (Book 1 £4.99), Books 10, 11, 12 & NEW Book 13 £4.50 each. The Sunday Times Concise Crosswords 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6. Except the items in brackets, software available for all titles for IBM PCs and Acorn Archimedes computers - Price £14.95 each - also The Times Computer Crosswords Vols 1 to 6. The Sunday Times Vols 1 to 6 and The Times Jubilee Edition. Prices inc p&hp (UK). Cheques with order payable to Akom Ltd, 51 Manor Lane, London SE13 5QW. Tel 0181-852 4575 (24 hrs). No credit cards.

THE LISTENER CROSSWORD

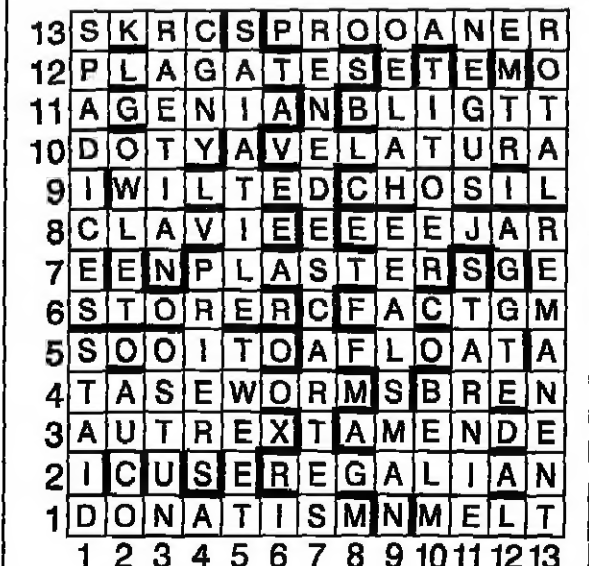
No. 3294: Optimist, by Fenrix

Clues and lights fall into three categories:

- 1) The clue contains an extraneous word. The initial letter of this is to be found at least once in the answer. Only one of such examples is to be misplaced on entry (Thus "roar" might be entered as "rroa", "oror", etc., but not e.g. "orra").
- 2) A word in the clue has been distorted by the insertion of a letter. This letter is to be omitted from the answer wherever it appears.
- 3) A word in the clue has been distorted by the omission of a letter. This letter is to be inserted into or added to the answer to form the light.

Additions and omissions may affect any component of a clue. Mutilated lights are rarely words in themselves, and some words in clues cease to be words after treatment.

One phrase and one nickname are not in Chambers. In clue order, rogue letters spell out a quotation and a brief reference to its origin. The title refers only to this quotation.



Solution and notes to No 3291. Coordination by Duck

COGITO ERGO SUM comes from René Descartes' *Discours de la Methode* (initial letters of clues not involved in clashes). Descartes was responsible for Cartesian coordinates.

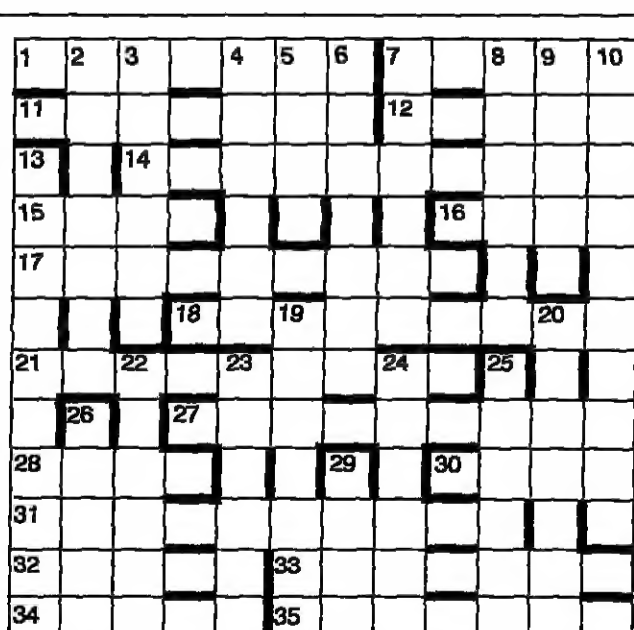
The winner was Neil D. Stein, of south-west London. The runners-up were Mrs Jennifer M Hinchliff, of Edinburgh and Mrs E.V. Roberts, of East Molesey.

ACROSS

1. During reaction of propionic acid, 1, a doc. strangely take no part at first (7, two words)
7. Monkeys camp with unseemly haste in the highlands (5)
11. A subversive learns to blow up arms depot (7)
12. Monastic rule reversed, omitting "liberal unction" drill (5)
14. Ritual eating of raw meat ceased - a magic hoop showing no trace of cannibalism (10)
15. Ill-rendered lieder caused irritation (4)
16. Now more towns like Cheltenham reverse changes (4)
17. Ringo Starr, discarding rig, surprisingly turned up (9)
18. With a minimum of justice, Surrey cops twist wrist (9)
21. After frightful fracas Parisian tat disfigured gang boss (9)
27. A romantic having no time for playing *fp* (9)
28. A solitary tree unbent in combustion (4)
30. Play ball with Times newspaper (4)
31. Knitter works with hesitation: his customer might have got one (10)
32. In Chambers it's shown to men otherwise in Chelsea (5)
33. You'll need a clue for this - the proposal is about a road (7)
34. From plebs, Mel, not born high (5)
35. It's existent in country pile housing English baronet (7, two words)

DOWN

2. What leaders heave when coppers surround working English miner (7)
3. Having more than one part amateur has a role recast before tea (6)
4. Useless as curios, being decayed (6)
5. "I'll be in bed, playing xylophone" No, honey, that's out of order (4)
6. Big catch for late fish-eater (7)
7. Keep on getting up before us parents and you'll get smacks (6)
8. Sign to start relaying Reed number (6)
9. Wary deity in a storm becomes red (5)
10. Steel's in Liberal suite (ten) (10)
13. For water-plants elaborate tests will determine proportion surviving (10)
19. Geometric figures "bor him" (sic) (7)
20. From rough indication, Italian peasants (7)
22. Min's main mistake is belief that Stones have soul (6)
23. Fellow first to glory in old saw "Where there's muck there's brass" - here's an example (6)
24. Sinful as incest, what some women swear (6)
25. Here's the head of family riding a cob (6)
26. Ripe singing at close (5)
29. Coasting with restraint around Sweden (4)



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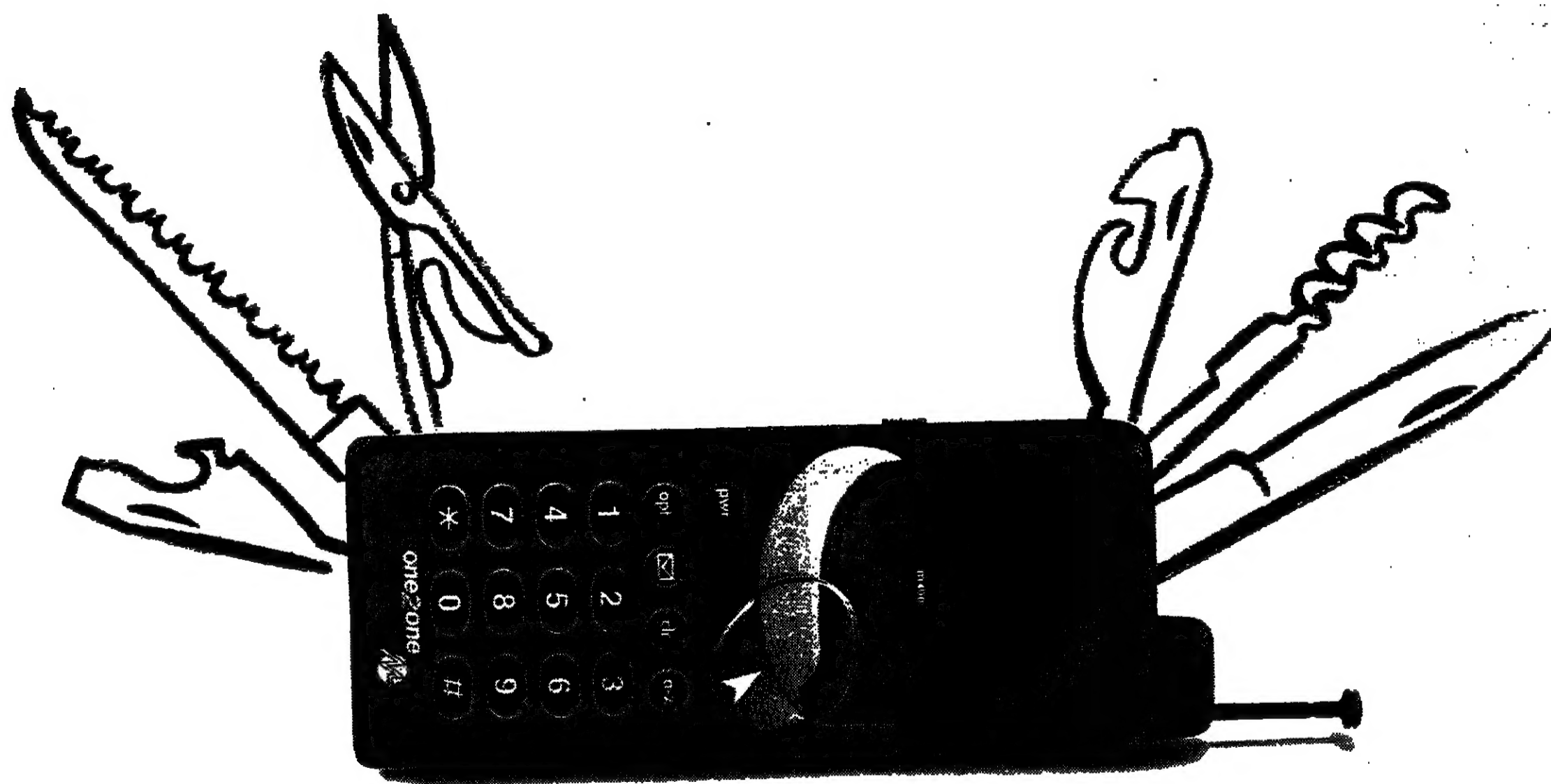
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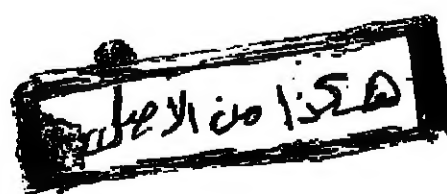
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